Commentary

VOLUME NINETY-ONE • NUMBER THREE • MARCH 1991

Good News About American Education

Barbara Lerner

Israel, America & Arab Delusions
Daniel Pipes

The Ideology of Homelessness
Joseph Adelson

Ronald Reagan & the Culture War
Midge Decter

A Monument to Messianism
Ruth R. Wisse

Indian Love Call
Richard Grenier

Literature by Quota
Carol Iannone

Books in Review:
Michael Novak/Irwin M. Stelzer/Steven Beller/
Terry Eastland/Ronald Radosh

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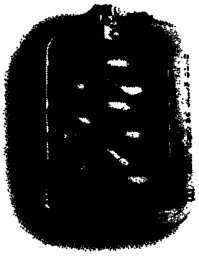

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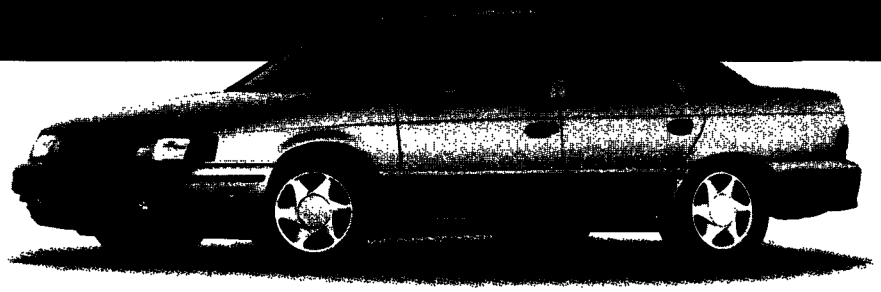

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Letters from Readers

Teaching the Holocaust

LUCY S. DAWIDOWICZ, *one of* COMMENTARY*'s most distinguished and valued contributors, died in December 1990, shortly after the publication of her article, "How They Teach the Holocaust." We print below a selection of the correspondence we received on the article.*—ED.

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

For fifteen years, the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) worked closely with the late Lucy S. Dawidowicz. She was indispensable in giving advice and information to the ADL's Braun Center for Holocaust Studies. In turn, we furnished her with the curricula that served as the basis of her article, "How They Teach the Holocaust" [December 1990].

Her views continue to be provocative. In her article, she writes that curricula "generalize the highly particular nature and history of anti-Semitism by subsuming (and camouflaging) it under general rubrics like scapegoating, prejudice, and bigotry." If anything, Mrs. Dawidowicz could have made more explicit the reasons why many of these curricula are produced. The Holocaust has been used—in our opinion, abused—as a case study of persecution and moral dilemmas. To quote the organizers of a workshop for teachers in Winnetka, Illinois: "We want to complicate kids' thinking, to raise analogous issues, such as slavery, in this country."

As Mrs. Dawidowicz rightly observes, such an approach "de-emphasizes" the Holocaust (as it would slavery). It might even twist the meaning of the subject by failing to explain how anti-Semitism mobilizes mass hatreds or how, when embodied in public policy or in a nation's culture, anti-Semitism defines behavior, not just bigoted misbehavior. Perhaps worse, the intention to generalize, to see "the Holocaust" as a pretext instead of as a text, invites not only analogies but also "better" examples of oppression to replace the Holocaust because they might seem more "relevant."

The subject of the destruction of European Jewry carries its own weight. This, Lucy S. Dawidowicz has shown in everything she wrote on the subject. For this, she will be long remembered.

NAT KAMENY
DENNIS B. KLEIN
ADL Braun Center for
Holocaust Studies
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In her most recent, and sadly last, article for COMMENTARY, Lucy S. Dawidowicz questions the nature of Holocaust education. Having written extensively about that tragic event, Mrs. Dawidowicz comments that in educational studies in the United States a better job is done "in describing what happened than explaining why it happened."

The Armonk Institute, a newly established institute for German/American Jewish relations, concurs with that observation. In this vein, the Institute has been participating in discussions during the past two years with members of state and local Holocaust commissions as well as with authors of Holocaust curricula urging an analysis of the flaws of the Weimar Republic: its abandonment of the rule of law protecting individual rights, its paranoia about encirclement after military defeat, its inability to cope with inflation, and its hesitancy in recognizing the dangers in continued teachings by the Church of contempt for non-majority religions. Much of this history is now being taught to German schoolchildren in West Germany and it is hoped soon in what was formerly East Germany. Further, as persuasive indicators that it will not happen again, we have urged examination of the role of the Federal Republic of Germany during the past 45 years in establishing and enriching a constitutional democracy with a strong rule of law recognizing human rights as well as binding itself to the European community. Such contextual instruction is important for young American students and their teachers.

In the summer of 1990, the Armonk Institute, together with its German partner, the *Atlantik-Bruecke*, sponsored a two-week seminar in Germany for American high-school teachers who participate in Holocaust seminars conducted by the State of Ohio's Holocaust commission. The seminar

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dealt with these subjects and, as suggested by Lucy S. Dawidowicz, context was emphasized throughout for teachers as well as students.

THEODORE ELLENOFF
Chairman, Armonk Institute
Chairman, COMMENTARY
Publication Committee
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

As the author of Pennsylvania's new Holocaust curriculum guide, I read with personal and professional interest Lucy S. Dawidowicz's "How They Teach the Holocaust." . . . While Mrs. Dawidowicz does not appear to be enthralled with any existing Holocaust guide of the 25 she reviewed, I submit that both the Jewish community and the general community are made stronger by the publication, distribution, and use of educational materials of this type in our schools. I for one encourage every Jewish community to advocate the adoption of a state Holocaust curriculum, . . . even if it means having to prepare one themselves.

Mrs. Dawidowicz reviews an April 1990 pre-publication edition of *The Holocaust—A Guide for Pennsylvania Teachers* rather than the approved guide which was published by the Pennsylvania Department of Education in November 1990. As luck would have it, the specific items she criticizes in the activities section, relating to research about war-toy sales in the United States and facilities to conduct war games, were both deleted from the final edition along with several other activities deemed to be too controversial.

I designed activities such as these two for the purpose of providing stimulating and provocative discussion for students and to stretch their minds on contemporary issues. Mrs. Dawidowicz implies that there is something inappropriate about letting students discuss the glorification of war in American society and how that may or may not influence militarism, and that such discussions are not relevant to Holocaust education. . . . Her opinion is clearly not shared by a large majority of Pennsylvania educators or those who worked on and/or approved the Pennsylvania guide for publication.

The reason I consented to delete these activities despite a sincere belief in their value is that political leaders with the power to approve curricula have a natural tendency to be risk-averse to *any* criticism, valid or not. They appear to have a fear of being the target of the same brand of ideologically-based criticism which I found to be rampant throughout Mrs. Dawidowicz's article. It is this fear which, ironically, I find responsible for the lack of depth in many curricula on the issue of Christian anti-Semitism.

Mrs. Dawidowicz's article is a scathing attack on virtually all Holocaust curricula. What she fails to realize is that these curricula, particularly those with a state imprimatur, do not get developed in a vacuum by a single "enlightened" scholar and then whisked post-haste to the printer. Many if not all are serially or in parallel reviewed line-by-line, word-by-word by literally scores of persons each of whom may be more concerned about who might be offended about the accuracy and appropriateness of the material.

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I was gratified by her view that the Pennsylvania curriculum guide includes "an excellent lesson on the history of Christian anti-Semitism." It was not a difficult effort to find the material which elicited her praise. Yet getting this section approved was an entire project in itself. I relied heavily on enlightened religious leaders in both the Catholic and Protestant churches to review and comment on this section, and I followed their advice on improving both the historical accuracy and the sensitivity of the portrayal of this highly sensitive subject area. Had the political dynamics not been so fortunate, I can envision a scenario wherein discussion of this important subject would have been censored, seriously curtailed, or would have endangered the entire project.

The fact that other Holocaust curriculum guides do not measure up to Mrs. Dawidowicz's standards on teaching about the Holocaust may be an indictment not so much of the authors as of the system for approving the guides in the various states and localities. I would not be surprised to find the educational landscape littered with the corpses of perfectly valuable documents to teach the Holocaust whose developers failed to traverse successfully the political labyrinth of the approval process.

One may be capable of developing the best-written, historically accurate, and useful guide in the history of the genre. Yet if there is sufficient criticism, valid or not, government decision-makers will take whatever action is necessary to keep the document from being published as an official government publication. This criticism might come from the Turkish-American community who object to the use of the term "Armenian genocide"; it might come from those who do not agree with Israel's legitimacy as a nation; it might come from Christian leaders who are offended by the history of anti-Semitism; it might come from Jews who feel insulted by any acknowledgment that there were victims of the Nazis other than Jews.

It would have taken only one dissatisfied bureaucrat in the Pennsylvania Department of Education, for example, to delay indefinitely the publication of this guide, and many were in a position to do so.

Thus, those who share the view of Mrs. Dawidowicz that it is inappropriate to teach students to "raise old questions about how we should respond to new oppression" (as she charges the New Jersey curriculum with doing), directly or indirectly promote the bland homogenization of curriculum guides on the Holocaust. The reason is that developers of these curricula often feel they must meticulously avoid any controversy and try to please everyone in order to facilitate approval. . . .

My personal view (which is reflected in the Pennsylvania guide) is that if we do not teach the lessons of the Holocaust and apply them to "new oppression," there is only marginal, if any, value in offering Holocaust education in our schools. Teachers in many school districts who have little interest in teaching the history of the Holocaust itself are enthusiastic about the Pennsylvania curriculum guide because of its emphasis and creative treatment of the human-behavior issues which led both directly and indirectly to the Holocaust. . . .

The Pennsylvania guide, which has now been published commercially by Millersville University (171 pp., $15.00, Office for University Advancement, Millersville University, Millersville, PA 17551), does seek to foster the effort to teach students to think about their behavior and its consequences to themselves and others. The scores of educators, scholars, historians, and community leaders who participated in this six-year effort in Pennsylvania feel very good about the product, and we expect the publication to make a difference in the lives of our students.

GARY M. GROBMAN
The Pennsylvania Jewish Coalition
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I have no quarrel with, only praise for, Lucy S. Dawidowicz's excellent article, "How They Teach the Holocaust." However, I would like to suggest that many of the distortions and abuses described in the article are a consequence, in part, of making the Holocaust a special study instead of a chapter in the history of Europe.

For example: *we* know that claims that the Holocaust did not occur are about as plausible as claims that Greek philosophy was stolen from black Africa; but what of the typical American, possessed in equal measure of ignorance and common sense? Parents whose children come home with outlandish notions taught by an "Afrocentric" curriculum and shaken by a study of the Holocaust, will naturally conclude (if they do not know better, and most don't) that, in Mrs. Dawidowicz's words, "the Holocaust is nothing more than the Jewish branch of oppression studies." They will be a receptive audience to the lie that the Holocaust is a myth propagated by Jews seeking victim status.

What is missing from the schools, and sorely needed, is narrative history—well written, dramatic, detailed, and fairly comprehensive. In the context of a history of the rise of civilization, of the religious and political development of Europe, and of the conflicts of the 20th century, it will be much more difficult for anyone to promote historical fictions or to deny historical facts. The denial of facts leaves obvious gaps in the dense texture of narrative; the invention of fictions presupposes gaps that aren't there. Consequently, narrative context requires the dishonest to falsify many more facts, and that makes their game more obvious, hence, less likely to be tolerated.

Mrs. Dawidowicz rightly deplores the failure of the schools to explain the Holocaust in terms of a longer history of anti-Semitism and to acknowledge the role of American military force in terminating Hitler's career. The latter would be flatly impossible if the Holocaust were studied as a chapter of history. The former would be less likely, since students would have learned to see historical events as having deep roots and they would already know something of the Diaspora.

Mrs. Dawidowicz complains, too, of fraudulent cooptations of the Holocaust's powerful lesson. That is not limited to the lower schools. I have known many college students who emerged from a course on the Holocaust more impressed by pink triangles than by Stars of David. Clearly, . . . such perversions of history are to be corrected on the grounds of truth, not proprietary interest; but that can be done more successfully when historical events are studied historically and not as disconnected episodes. As it is now, the general public is likely to suspect that any such correction is mere special pleading.

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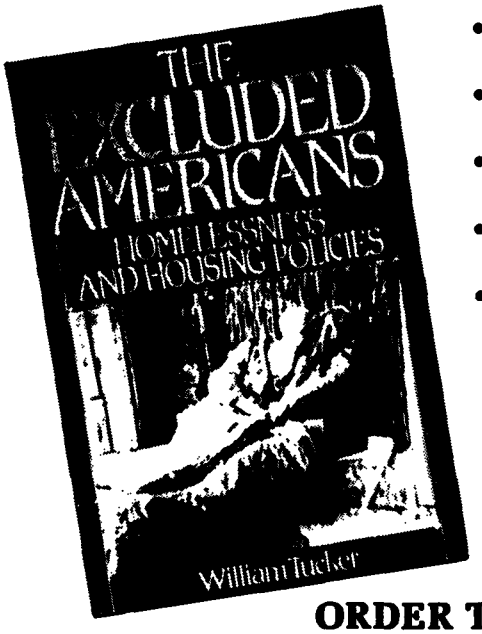

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needs reforming. But that would be facilitated by a more fundamental reform, which is to restore narrative history to the schools.

THOMAS SHORT
Gambier, Ohio

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . As a member of the National Teacher Training Team and a coordinator for *Facing History and Ourselves*, I was appalled at the depth of Lucy S. Dawidowicz's misunderstanding and, worse, brazen misinterpretation of our program. Her criticism reflects a cursory reading of materials, failure to consult with developers of the program, adherence to a political agenda similar to that which nearly sabotaged *Facing History*'s national funding in Washington, and a poor grasp of several significant issues in moral education.

While Mrs. Dawidowicz is critical of several facets of the *Facing History* program, none is more spurious and facile than her charge that *Facing History* "is a vehicle for instructing thirteen-year-olds in civil disobedience." Mrs. Dawidowicz contends that *Facing History* simplifies moral choice into an either/or dichotomy: conform/obey vs. resist/use of conscience; teaches that obedience and conformity are not admirable qualities; and encourages moral relativism. . . . Nothing could be further from the truth. *Facing History* presents complex moral situations within a historical framework and asks that students apply rational standards of moral reflection to reach considered judgments.

In each chapter we hear the voices of the perpetrators and the victims, the bystanders and the resisters embedded in documentation and dialogue that students can comprehend and assimilate. Students draw upon the literature to comprehend the circumstances under which choices were made. Analysis of decision-making is critical to this process. We encourage our students to understand the context of events that drove momentous decisions. They examine the decision-makers and their role in the dilemma, the consequences of their actions and their ramifications. . . .

While the study of obedience is an important element of *Facing History*, it is not taught as an end in itself but rather as a vehicle for something else—consent. To see the byproduct of bystander behavior, we ask our students to see that the people empowered by an inactive citizenry are those who are not willing or perhaps able to make informed judgments about their own condition or that of others. *Facing History* encourages students to be thoughtfully reflective of their role as citizens. In no way does that encourage disobedience. To the contrary, it promotes what Thomas Jefferson claimed was the highest virtue of an informed public—civic intelligence.

Not satisfied with a sideswipe, Mrs. Dawidowicz pushes the argument still further. She claims that for anyone "who has studied totalitarian societies, the critical ingredient . . . is not obedience but terror." The two concepts are dependent but not exclusive. Terror allows obedience in its most pernicious state to exist because it assures complicity of response. When citizens are terrorized and their lives threatened, they become docile and easy prey to totalitarian forces. Our students understand that the Nazi internal police and SS, highly effective arms of the public-policy apparatus, used torture, threats, and death to quash debate and gather victims. These actions ensured the obedience of significant elements of the general citizenry who feared public outrage and the punishment that would result. These conditions did not occur overnight. A significant amount of time is spent examining the pattern of events that led to the Final Solution. The answers given are not simplistic . . . and there is a depth of learning about obedience which emerges from *Facing History*. . . .

Lucy S. Dawidowicz has left a scholarly legacy; her book, *The War Against the Jews 1933-1945*, is a seminal work. Unfortunately, her final effort detracts from her reputation. Its publication should not go unchallenged simply because Mrs. Dawidowicz is no longer among us. Debates on appropriate Holocaust pedagogy continue. "How They Teach the Holocaust" contributes little to the dialogue.

CHARLES J. MEYERS
Highland Park, Illinois

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Lucy S. Dawidowicz . . . loved an intellectual battle. She relished the clash of ideas, the intensity of debate. Now that she is gone, it is only proper to temper harsh criticism since, alas, she cannot answer. Nevertheless I write to say I was deeply disappointed in her article. . . .

Mrs. Dawidowicz blasts the Holocaust curricula for a number of serious shortcomings. One of them is the fact that most curricula plunge directly into the story of Hitler's Germany without providing background into the Weimar Republic. Another is the failure to suggest that anti-Semitism had a history before Hitler, by omitting the history of anti-Semitism and especially its roots in Christian doctrine as a necessary background to the murder of European Jews. But *Facing History and Ourselves* is guilty of none of these shortcomings. It does not plunge directly into the story of Hitler's Germany but rather provides a detailed background into the collapse of Weimar and the disintegration of democracy. Instead of skipping over the prior history of anti-Semitism, *Facing History* is among that handful of curricula which devote many pages to the Christian roots of anti-Semitism, to political anti-Semitism, and to the unique Nazi contribution, racial anti-Semitism.

Moreover, *Facing History* avoids simulation games and warns against them repeatedly in its workshops and in its resource book, and it also—to mention another charge leveled against some of the other curricula—teaches about Jewish life before the Holocaust. None of this is acknowledged by Mrs. Dawidowicz. . . .

In *Facing History and Ourselves* the Holocaust is taught as an event in history, situated in time and in space, an event that happened to one people—the Jewish people. The Holocaust was a unique event, but its implications are universal. . . .

Lucy S. Dawidowicz was right about so many things, but when she was wrong, she was truly wrong.

MICHAEL BERENBAUM
Georgetown University
Washington, D. C.

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

At the beginning of her article, Lucy S. Dawidowicz makes reference to an outside reviewer, who, she writes, criticized the *Facing History and Ourselves* curriculum "for failing to present the viewpoints of the Nazis and the Ku Klux Klan." I am the reviewer in question.

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Although I was held up to ridicule by two Education Department officials, the Associated Press, the United Press, PBS Radio, and the New York papers, only the Atlanta *Jewish Weekly* delved into the story deeply enough to exonerate me in large part. I did receive an apology from an Assistant Secretary of Education . . . for the defamation I suffered from out-of-context leaks and agitated accusations by various officials. Nevertheless, the impression remains that I advocated the teaching of hate groups in the classroom. I did not. My reference to these groups was meant to be ironic, and that is the way it was understood until someone decided to make political hay out of it through misrepresentation.

I was also the focus of the congressional subcommittee hearing convened by Congressman Ted Weiss in 1988 to air the complaints of supporters of *Facing History and Ourselves* that I, or my comments, had been responsible for killing the grant proposals in 1986. Interestingly, I was never informed about this hearing. When I did learn about it by chance, I went to Washington, reviewed the record, and submitted written remarks for inclusion in the final committee report. According to a staffer with whom I subsequently conversed, the chairman decided not to allow me this courtesy because he did not think my contribution germane. Thus, . . . many are left with a very negative impression of me and my views.

In analyzing the universe of programs available for Holocaust education, it seems to me that Lucy S. Dawidowicz has done what the Department of Education should have done years ago, instead of simply rejecting *Facing History*'s annual applications for funding. (It should be understood that I was but one member of the third panel to which the *Facing History* curriculum was submitted.) The Department could have provided information for schools about other programs that had already been developed and disseminated.

Like Mrs. Dawidowicz, in reviewing *Facing History* I was impressed by the pacifist bias of its approach and also by the undue emphasis on guilt. Rather than teaching children that the Nazis set out to murder all Jews, and thus were guilty of two major sins, hatred and murder, the children were shown how they too could become haters and murderers. That approach, it seemed to me, would not accomplish *Facing History*'s goal of lessening anti-Semitism and racism. Just as educators have recently discovered (or rediscovered) that knowledge of sex and drugs, abstracted from the moral law, does not reduce experimentation in these areas, knowledge of hatred *per se*, and even of the long, lamentable history of man's violation of the moral law, are not sufficient for the prevention of its occurrence.

If I still have as much influence in 1991 as some claimed I had in 1986, i.e., that I singlehandedly stopped a grant proposal from being funded, I would like to use my "influence" to promote the use of Michigan's *A Holocaust Curriculum* and New York State's *Teaching About the Holocaust and Genocide*, based on Lucy S. Dawidowicz's recommendations.

Many thanks for the fine article.

CHRISTINA F. PRICE
Marietta, Georgia

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

The article by Lucy S. Dawidowicz is a most important contribution to the several articles published in COMMENTARY analyzing *how* a subject is taught in our nation's schools. Since Mrs. Dawidowicz was such a recognized authority on the Holocaust, it is significant that she concludes after study that the U.S. Department of Education "had ample reason to turn down the grant application" for the school curriculum *Facing History and Ourselves*.

Unfortunately, her mention of me in her first paragraph refers to my "negative opinion" of the curriculum in the same sentence with other criticisms with which I do not agree. So I would appreciate an opportunity to set the record straight about my comments, which were fully stated in my August 13, 1987 letter to William Kristol, then chief of staff at the Department of Education, and which I have made available to reporters who asked for it.

My letter clearly stated that I "certainly believe that the Holocaust is an important fact of history that must be taught if history is to be accurate and factual—and that

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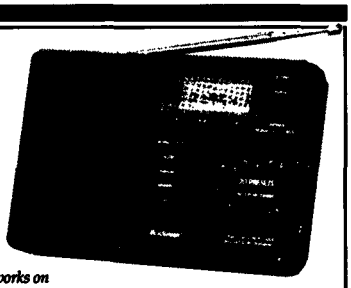

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it must be taught sympathetically to the victims."

I fully agree with Mrs. Dawidowicz that "the primary lesson of the Holocaust" is "Thou shalt not murder." Unfortunately, that is not the lesson taught in *Facing History*. As she says, the course is "a vehicle for instructing thirteen-year-olds in civil disobedience and indoctrinating them with propaganda for nuclear disarmament"—and American children hardly need to be instructed in the "virtues of disobedience."

In my letter to the Department of Education, I cited excerpts from the "journals" which the children who took the course were required to write. These student comments were contained in a magazine called *Moral Education Forum* published by Hunter College . . . in the summer of 1981. The authors of this publication were obviously supporters of *Facing History*. One need only read the statements of the students who studied the curriculum to understand its negative and confusing effects. Here are some of the words of the students, as proudly recorded and published in *Moral Education Forum*:

> I have learned that there is seldom a right or wrong but rather a right or left.
>
> I feel as though something I have had all my life has been taken away from me, something that can never be totally restored. I almost feel that I need it back because I feel so awful without it. . . .

My letter included additional documentation from the February 1981 issue of a publication entitled *Independent School*. Here I quote again directly from a student journal:

> I'm conscious of having changed in the strength of my convictions on many of the ethical dilemmas we've confronted. But in other ways I'm less sure of myself and more introspective. Where do I draw the line between right and wrong?

I fail to see why it should be difficult to "draw the line between right and wrong" when the topic is the Holocaust. Something is very defective if *Facing History* has that effect on children.

Elisabeth H. Colt and Fanny A. Connelly, also supporters of *Facing History*, gave their evaluation in the summer of 1980. It was very revealing, and again I quote directly from the journals of students who took the *Facing History and Ourselves* course:

> The most meaningful parts of the book to me were when the boy stopped believing in God, and when the father was dying. I think that maybe my faith is waning, a little, just from reading about it. Unfortunately, this book will always be tucked in my memory.
>
> We probed questions that had no right or wrong answers and I became more and more confused as to how I stood on several issues.

These student-written comments make clear that the purpose of *Facing History* is not the objective presentation of a disgraceful historical event, or even the drawing of relevant moral lessons to guide us in the future. The children were just confused. This was confirmed in the project evaluation made by Marcus Lieberman of the Harvard Graduate School of Education, as cited in *Moral Education Forum*. . . . Professor Lieberman called the curriculum "experimental" and "controversial," and stated that the purpose of the program was to make "changes in the students' moral, ego, and social development." He admitted that the junior-high-school students who studied the curriculum "complained bitterly about the difficulty in answering the questions . . ." and that they had an "emotional response to what students perceived as a high level of abuse. . . ."

Another evaluator, Betty Bardige, stated that students studying this curriculum were regularly "asked to keep journals in which they record their thoughts and feelings after each class. . . ."

In my 1987 letter to the Department of Education, I said that such psychological manipulation and privacy-invading treatment are unacceptable in federally-funded curricula. . . .

Mrs. Dawidowicz also points out in her article how the "moral lessons" which *Facing History* tries to teach to students are "inappropriate to the subject." For example, *Facing History* tries to draw a parallel between the Holocaust and "a potential nuclear holocaust" and uses the course to . . . implement the agenda of the nuclear-freeze movement of the mid-1980's. . . .

The failure of the schools to teach history is a national scandal, and the Holocaust is a part of history which young Americans should learn. But using the Holocaust as an excuse to force a political agenda or psychological experimentation on children does not serve the cause of truth or responsible pedagogy.

PHYLLIS SCHLAFLY
Eagle Forum Education & Legal Defense Fund
Washington, D. C.

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

It certainly does not surprise me that school systems are deficient in their presentation of the Holocaust. It is my impression, based on nothing more than a cursory glance at books in a synagogue library and passing comments, that educators in Jewish religious schools also have difficulty presenting the subject of the Holocaust to their young (I should add that I had difficulty telling my own children the gruesome facts). . . . The need to warn Jewish children of past dangers as a guarantee of future security conflicts with the need to make children feel secure and safe now; simple, easily comprehended explanations like scapegoating and xenophobia compete with admissions on the part of educators that explanations of the Holocaust remain elusive, partial, and unsatisfying; the teaching of tragic history which may foster cohesion and a sense of common experience among Jewish children conflicts with the sense of universality, with the idea that what happens to one group could happen to all groups at different times and places; the desire to foster a sense of self-sufficiency and strength encounters the image of the Jews as victims of atrocity. Therefore, children in Jewish religious schools no less than in the public schools may be presented with a distorted view of the Holocaust which focuses on the uniqueness of the Nazi period and only briefly places it in its historical context as a culmination of the longstanding, insidious, anti-Jewish feeling that is still present in Christian civilization. . . .

BARABARA LEBER
Potomac, Maryland

Race Fever

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Academic "race fever," a malady expertly diagnosed by Edward Alexander ["Race Fever," November 1990], now claims its victims even in the best-intentioned institutions. Here at Wellesley, where

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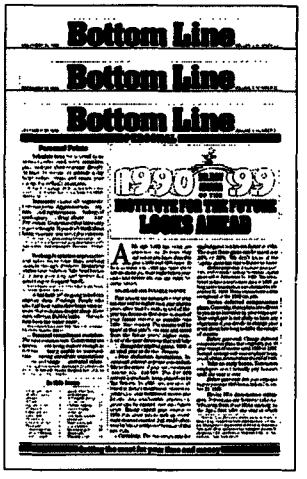

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the "multicultural" mantra is endlessly recited to ward off even the slightest infusion of critical thought, students are now required to satisfy a multicultural requirement for graduation. Among the eligible courses: Theory and Practice of Witchcraft; Women, Peace, and Protest; Liberation Theology; and Holocaust. Students who have studied The Military in Politics; Revolutions in the Modern World; Black Psychology; or Gender, Ethnicity, and Race, can graduate without encountering the Bible, the American Constitution, Homer, Shakespeare, or, indeed, even a single history or literature course.

In an ordinary Wellesley week (at the end of October), a resident philosopher circulated a memo condemning the selection of the co-chairs of a new committee solely because they are both white males. The college chaplain proposed that "maybe when we get together to discuss racism on this campus, everyone who speaks might [well] be saying 'My name is ————, and I am a racist.'" And the college newspaper noted that February 6, 1991 will be "Multicultural Day," when the predictable incantations for tolerance, diversity, and pluralism will be heard.

All this, of course, in an institution which systematically excludes from admission approximately half of all high-school graduates, solely on the ground of gender.

JEROLD S. AUERBACH
Wellesley College
Wellesley, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Edward Alexander's attack on the teaching of racial determinism in our colleges and universities was admirable except for his insistence that "Marxists" are to blame for this sorry state of affairs.

The truth is that racial determinism, the demonization of Western culture, and the idea that innocence or guilt can be measured by the pigmentation of the skin are being promoted by people whose beliefs cover a wide political spectrum. The most fanatical, white-hating black militants in Wisconsin, for example, have declared themselves supporters of a conservative Republican governor. . . . Anti-free-speech rules at public universities and the worst abuses of affirmative action have occurred under the administration of that same governor. There are a few self-styled "Marxists" who support racial determinism, but they are only impotent allies of black militants and elite whites whose views on matters other than race range from conservative Republican to liberal Democrat.

Can the new racial determinism be called a product of the "Left" or the "Right"? It is "Left" only to the extent that, *traditionally*, people who agitated for racial equality were considered "liberal" or even "Red." The new racial determinism does not advocate equality but glorifies the fascist idea that "blood" and "race" determine individual destiny.

A. D. POWELL
Madison, Wisconsin

EDWARD ALEXANDER writes:

Jerold S. Auerbach's report on the progress of multicultural illiteracy at Wellesley is a vivid reminder that politicized teaching poses a far greater danger than the familiar absurdity of assuming that every namable human activity is capable of being systematically studied. It transforms an academic institution, in which structures of thought and culture are analyzed, into a parochial one, whose aim is to fit students into structures (and to execrate those who prove recalcitrant). In 1881, six years after Wellesley opened, Matthew Arnold confidently predicted that in "the chain of forts, with which the fair host of the Amazons" were "engirdling" England and New England and upstate New York, women would "again study Greek." I wonder what he would say now.

I did not "insist" that Marxists are exclusively to blame for the current epidemic of race fever, as A.D. Powell claims, but noted that "a majority of the more assiduous practitioners of progressive race-thinking at the universities define themselves as Marxists." Marxism is a much greater occupational hazard among toilers at the universities than among politicians. But it is, of course, true that, in the university as in city hall or the state house, those who find it expedient to succumb to the demands of the race-thinkers include rightists, cowards, and garden-variety time-servers (like the seven Egyptologists who told *U.S. News & World Report* last November that the "Afrocentric" claim that ancient Egypt was a black nation is nonsense, but "then asked that their names not be used").

Depression as Disease

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

After reading Carol Iannone's review of William Styron's *Darkness Visible: A Memoir of Madness* [Books in Review, November 1990], one is reminded of C.P. Snow's classic essay, "The Two Cultures," in which he asserted that those who specialize in the humanities and those who specialize in the sciences inhabit two different worlds and are, for the most part, doomed to a lifetime of inability to comprehend one another. Miss Iannone's apparent ignorance of certain basic and generally accepted scientific facts provides a startling reminder of the enduring truth of Snow's hypothesis.

How is it possible that, in the year 1990, one can still come across a person of considerable education (and literary erudition) who somehow has not learned that depression (and, most especially, suicidal depression) is a *psychiatric illness*, not primarily a moral dilemma or a mortal sin. At least since the publication of Emile Durkheim's classic study of suicide in 1897, suicidal depression has entered the scientific domain once and for all. It is currently regarded as a bona-fide psychiatric disorder throughout the world. Perusal of the popular press (even by a professor of literature) is bound to turn up a plethora of references to the illness of depression and refinements in its effective treatment with anti-depressant agents and electroconvulsive therapy.

Generally, psychiatrists do not encourage patients to deny their own individual responsibility for their acts and attitudes. Of course, there are some patients who would prefer to abdicate personal responsibility, to view themselves as out of control, and to blame everything on their illness. However, it is also true that there are many patients who are at times in fact overwhelmed by depression and associated cognitive impairment (sometimes including psychotic distortions of reality) to the extent that they no longer have the capacity to control themselves or to resist powerful suicidal urges. In such cases it is necessary for the physician to take temporary responsibility for the patient and to sequester him in

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a protective environment until the risk of suicide has passed. It would be disingenuous to suggest that such individuals, when acutely suicidal, are manifesting a moral lapse . . . rather than a psychiatric illness that actually does entail a temporary breakdown of normal impulse control and an impairment of rational judgment.

I can assure Carol Iannone that we have learned a great deal about depression since the time of Dante and that sometimes it is sadly true that our fate is entirely out of our hands.

ROBERT LLOYD GOLDSTEIN, M.D.
Department of Clinical
Psychiatry
College of Physicians
and Surgeons
Columbia University
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Carol Iannone takes William Styron to task for his writings on depression and his emphasis on the "disease model." She doubts that this model is "truly more helpful," claims that "to say the cause is physical seems ultimately to be saying very little," and prefers instead "thinking in terms of . . . 'sin,'" which she believes is "reparable by recourse to the transcendent."

It seems to me that Miss Iannone's discussion of depression is limited by her failure to distinguish among the various phenomena that are often imprecisely referred to by this single term. In its colloquial usage this term applies to common emotional experiences of unhappiness and sadness which tend to be relatively transient for most people and rarely incapacitating. Perhaps in *this* sense Miss Iannone's claim that "faulty moral and characterological habits . . . lead to . . . depression" has some validity. However, when the term "depressed" is used—as William Styron uses it—in the clinical sense, designated in the official psychiatric nomenclature as "Major Depression," it refers to a very different phenomenon. Here the disturbance in mood is profoundly severe, often incapacitating, and often associated with certain characteristic symptoms including suicidal ideation. To fail to recognize this distinct clinical entity is to ignore the immense clinical and research data with which the medical literature is replete.

Recognizing this distinction and, indeed, recognizing the *disease* of major depression is critically important because extremely efficacious treatments are readily available to most of those who seek treatment. There are many antidepressant medications and other treatments that completely and relatively speedily eradicate the symptoms of major depression for many individuals, though unfortunately William Styron was apparently among the minority who do not respond to anti-depressant medication. . . .

The notion that all depression is "sin" or moral weakness does a great disservice to the many individuals who suffer from major depression and who could benefit immensely from anti-depressant medication, for example, but who will be less inclined to seek and receive medical treatment to the extent that they subscribe to Miss Iannone's "depression-as-moral-weakness" hypothesis. . . .

BRIAN LADDS, M.D.
Department of Psychiatry
Mount Sinai School of Medicine
Mount Sinai Hospital
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Carol Iannone's review . . . may be valid as a critique of William Styron's literary style and motives. However, her observations suggesting that severe depression should not be treated as an illness are misleading. . . .

Lithium and other psychotropic drugs like Elavil and Imipramin have been used to treat depressive disorders since the early 60's. The ensuing thirty years of clinical experience have been studied exhaustively by an army of researchers drawn from the academy, from corporate labs, and from the National Institutes of Mental Health. Their findings overwhelmingly support three conclusions: (1) these drugs have a dramatic effect on the symptoms of serious depressive illness; (2) they are very effective in its treatment and cure, especially in combination with some form of "talk therapy"; and (3) they have no serious side-effects in the vast majority of patients. Of course, these drugs do not work with all depressed persons (they did not work for Styron, he reports) and shock therapy is still being used in some intractable cases. . . . No one who has read case histories of the behavior of people suffering from manic-depression, one form of depressive illness, would ever suggest that there is not something seriously wrong with the chemistry of their brains. For example, the same person might sell his house to three different buyers, go to a crowded airport carrying a ladder and planning to make a speech there, and then find himself a week later unable to get out of bed or wash himself.

Of course bouts of the blues or even temporary feelings of despair after a succession of real disappointments in life are not what is meant by depressive illness. But anyone who is in a state of continual anxiety and who cannot stop worrying about his ability to perform even simple tasks, and/or anyone who has persistent thoughts of suicide, accompanied by reduced sex drive and a general loss of interest in life—such a person should consult a therapist about some form of drug treatment. And if that particular therapist does not believe in using drugs to treat these symptoms, the sufferer should look for a different one. Nowadays only a very small number of therapists reject the use of drugs as part of the treatment for serious depressive symptoms.

Another misconception in Miss Iannone's review is the idea that will power and drugs are somehow mutually exclusive in attempting to overcome life's problems. Psychotropic drugs are far from being "magic bullets," and they do not create states of euphoria. The patient is helped in confronting the normal disappointments and stresses of everyday life but . . . character and will are still needed to make the confrontation a success.

In 1893 William James, perhaps the greatest psychologist of them all, gave his famous lecture, "Is Life Worth Living?," in which he eloquently argued that certain depressed individuals who were contemplating suicide could use their will to fight back against these destructive thoughts and moods. . . . I am sure that if he were alive today, James would counsel depressed individuals to use *both* drug-oriented therapy and their own will to fight the disease.

DAVE M. O'NEILL
Pace University
New York City

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To the Editor of Commentary:

. . . I agree with Carol Iannone that the characterization of alcoholism and drug addiction as diseases excuses the individual from personal responsibility. In fact, however, these are not the essence of the depressive illness itself but rather the patient's unfortunate efforts to cope with the illness. Since the disease is essentially self-destructive, these coping mechanisms, though seemingly aimed at obtaining relief, actually carry forward the thrust of the disease—self-destruction. But it is not easy in the case of illness, whether physical or mental, to distinguish between the essential disease process and the effort to cope with it. Pain, tenderness, and fever seem intended to cope with an infection, but on that account do we say that they are not manifestations of the illness?

A more relevant distinction would be that between features of illness that occur without the intention of the patient, and those that he voluntarily evokes. If there is an element of volition, Miss Iannone seems to be saying, then the concept of disease does not apply, but moral lapse does. Certainly with respect to much undesirable behavior, illness may be an explanation but not an excuse. However, I find it difficult to distinguish degrees of resistibility of impulse for someone else. Of course in any civilized society one must draw lines, but it is often not clear exactly where the line should be drawn.

Miss Iannone actually draws her conclusions about the etiology of depression from her opinions about its cure. "Clearly," she speculates, "what happened was that Styron's self-absorption was suddenly broken, permitting the entrance of healing thoughts, and, importantly, of concern for others." She also cites an anecdote of a woman cured of depression by thinking "of her children instead of herself." To this I would say, it is clear that Miss Iannone has never sat on the front lines opposite a suicidally depressed individual and tried to persuade him to refrain from suicide out of altruistic motives. It doesn't work—unless the patient is ready to come out of his depression on his own. Her argument founders on the conflict between the apocalyptic wish to die and the wish to be reborn that inhabits every depressed patient; on the ambiguity of the mind-body problem; and on the *post hoc ergo propter hoc* fallacy.

With respect to the first of these, every depressed patient will exhibit alternating indications of the wish to perish or to destroy himself and the wish, not only to survive, but to be reborn. . . . The dreams of even the most depressed individuals often show both tendencies in mutually correcting alternation.

With respect to the second, Miss Iannone comes down hard on the primacy of the mental over the physical. She has apparently never witnessed the seemingly miraculous recovery of depressed patients through anti-depressant medication. Those of us who have some familiarity with neuroscience, psychopharmacology, and psychodynamics remain puzzled. My own opinion, based upon decades of treating depressed and other mentally-ill individuals, is that experiential influences can be decisive, but only within limits . . . set by the biophysical and biochemical condition of the physical substrate of the mental apparatus, limits that are fairly broad under ordinary circumstances, but that narrow sharply when circumstances become more extreme.

With respect to the fallacy of confusing sequence with causation, I must remind Miss Iannone that most patients will attribute their illness to whatever happened just before they became ill, and their recovery to whatever happened just before they became aware of the process of recovery. Neither listening to the Brahms Alto Rhapsody nor hearing moralistic or religious admonitions will initiate a process of recovery, but once the process has been started, once a state of readiness to recover has been established—no matter whether spontaneously or induced by treatment—any of the immediately subsequent experiences will be credited with the recovery.

Psychiatric experience does not teach us all that we should like to know about depression, but neither does psychiatric naiveté.

Mortimer Ostow, M.D.
New York City

To the Editor of Commentary:

. . . . Carol Iannone's review of William Styron's *Darkness Visible* misses the mark as absolutely as the words of any uneducated bigot demonstrating the standard institutionalized prejudice against people with mental illness. It tells me that social and economic reforms in the mental-health field are still as far off in the future as they were during the so-called electroshock era of decades ago. . . .

The notion of self-serving motives on the part of William Styron is obnoxious. . . . I have never in my ten-year struggle with my own illness seen a writer express so eloquently and succinctly as Mr. Styron has . . . the alienation suffered by anyone with a severe mental illness. . . .

Styron is right in saying that the pain of severe depression is quite unimaginable. . . . His own experience of simply secluding himself and waiting for the depression to pass is just one possible variant. My own experience with the right drug and waiting for the depression to pass makes me realize that everyone must experience for himself that life-threatening event in order to . . . understand. . . .

Jeff Durham
Farmingville, New York

To the Editor of Commentary:

There is only one remedy for Carol Iannone's unbelievable ignorance and lack of understanding: to experience the illness of depression herself. Then let us see how she would go about reviewing William Styron's important book. (And I had always thought I would never wish depression on anyone!)

Katrina C. Reinhardt
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Carol Iannone writes:

Perhaps the tone of my review led some readers to conclude that I have no sympathy for people suffering from depression, that I think they should just stop whining and shape up. This is not true. There is a certain kind of new-age thinking that makes people responsible for everything from developing cancer to being born handicapped, and compared with both this and with an accusatory, condemnatory moralism (of which such new-age thinking is a variant), the medical diagnosis of depression as a straightforward physical disease must seem quite a relief. I tried to explain, perhaps not clearly enough, that the moral/spiritual understanding I was suggesting was not for purposes of blame, judgment, and condemnation but was a way out of them, an arrival at the abyss that is implicit in all material existence and an opportunity to transcend it.

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Also, although I did not mention it in the article, I do write about depression from first-hand experience. After a number of anti-depressant medications and several years of therapy did not work, I was healed along the lines I referred to in my article. In addition, the woman I mentioned whose depression lifted when she focused on her children instead of herself was my mother, and this was after all the anti-depressants had been tried and the doctor said shock therapy would be the next step. If many people have been helped by the medical aids, many have not, including William Styron, by his own account. It would be just as sad if people were discouraged from seeking other kinds of help than the medical, or encouraged to wait passively for deliverance through the passage of time, as Styron seems to counsel, although, as I pointed out in my review, his book belies this picture of utter helplessness and shows him to have arrived on his own at what Mortimer Ostow describes as the "readiness" to come out of it.

Another point that seems to need further clarification, however, is that "will power" is not the issue in the type of healing I was writing about, which instead involves a surrender of the will. This is again reflected in the wisdom of the Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) program, which I discussed briefly in my review, in which the alcoholic admits his own powerlessness to improve his life and asks a higher power for help. After taking his inventory, the alcoholic does not attempt by his own power to improve himself but asks God to remove his faults. I use the AA model here not because it is the only or even the best example but because it is a type of moral/spiritual aid that is recognized as effective (for many different problems) by the medical profession itself, and I am simply trying to emphasize *why* it is effective, i.e., because it takes proper measure of the human soul. The preliminary surrender, the moment that Dr. Ostow describes as "readiness," when "the patient is ready to come out of his depression on his own," is the kernel of faith that the individual brings, sometimes again and again. After that it can actually be exhilarating to unlearn the mental habits that have been the secret agents of unhappiness.

In special response to Robert Lloyd Goldstein, depression and suicide seem to be proliferating instead of shrinking nowadays, and I wonder if we have really come so very far from Dante in our understanding. Also, the two-culture theory cuts both ways; there is a tendency among scientists to imagine that the truth of such works as *The Divine Comedy* and the Bible is just some icing on the more substantial cake of scientific progress rather than a rich embodiment of precious, priceless wisdom that can be obtained in no other way.

Ukrainians & Jews

To the Editor of Commentary:

I wish to express my gratitude for the publication of Marco Carynnyk's "The Killing Fields of Kiev" [October 1990]. Mr. Carynnyk's article straightforwardly recounts facts which evoke a sense of horror in the reader. As the Soviet empire disintegrates, more such facts are being unearthed. In addition to the killing field at Bykivnia, near Kiev, reports have reached the West of other sites where Ukrainian victims of Soviet terror are buried: trenches filled with the bones of 5,000 dead in Poltava; 540 victims buried in a garbage dump in Donetsk. Yet the monsters who took part in perpetrating these crimes are today walking the streets of Kiev, Lvov, . . . Moscow. That such crimes, as well as their decades-long cover-up, were possible is silent yet eloquent testimony to the evil nature of the Soviet regime, and to the need for an independent, pluralistic Ukrainian state.

Democratic principles are part and parcel of the movement toward an independent Ukraine. The leaders of Rukh, the Popular Front of Ukraine, have made clear that anti-Semitism has no place within the pro-independence movement. They have declared that any provocation against Jews is an insult to Ukraine. In turn, Rukh has received enthusiastic support from Jewish organizations in Ukraine and the U.S.

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IVAN LOZOWY
Heritage Foundation
Washington, D.C.

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Marco Carynnyk's writing style echoes Josephus' apologetics, a methodology I call "histolation" (short for historical manipulation). . . . First, he injects a figure of "five, six, seven million Ukrainians starved to death." Note the placement of the "six million" . . . as well as the swelling number of victims which grows through the length of the article. Ignored is the fact that Ukrainians were not the only victims of Stalin; that among the victims were many nationalities including Jews; that the chain of killings stretched from Vladivostok to Mexico. . . .

Mr. Carynnyk's histolation concludes that Soviet Ukrainians suffered more than Jews under the Nazis. Did this suffering influence their actions? We understand the linkage, but cannot justify their share in the Holocaust. In those days their cruelty exceeded the acts of their Nazi masters. . . .

Jews in "Naziland" were sentenced to die. In the barren ghettos and death camps, not even a blade of grass grew. In the woodlands they struggled to evade Stefan Bandera's Ukrainian *Banderovci*. And in the end it did not matter if the Jews hailed or cursed the Fuehrer: their fate was sealed. Ukrainians, on the other hand, lived on rich farmlands. They had a choice of accepting or resisting collectivization, and unlike the Jews, they could hail *"Batushka"* [Father] Stalin and live.

In September 1941 Kiev fell to the Germans. We are led to believe by Mr. Carynnyk that an eyewitness saw NKVD convoys bringing victims to Bykivnia at the time, this despite the heavy fighting in and around the capital. Mr. Carynnyk relates that Ukrainians were killed for "refusing to be evacuated to the East," preferring, I assume, to live under the Nazis. Perhaps the witness mistook German convoys bringing Jews to the slaughter after the occupation of Kiev for NKVD convoys.

Later we read that the corpses had a "sweet stench of death." But the sweet stench of death I remember came from the gas chimneys of Birkenau and most likely from the ravine at Babi Yar where the Germans burned 105,000 people, mostly Jews. These Jews were captured and killed with the help of local Ukrainians. Mr. Carynnyk's histoliation also reveals that the "next day . . . a German official . . . unearthed the bodies in Bykivnia but showed no interest." (Later we read that this took place much later.). . . .

Next we are told that grave robbers defiled Bykivnia by digging up bodies looking for gold. But those of us who survived these killing fields witnessed only the destruction of Jewish mass graves, since local grave robbers respected known Christian burial grounds and cemeteries. . . . I wonder, too, about the child's skull with two bullet holes in it used by children to play soccer, since later on we read that victims were shot in the neck below the skull and not twice into the skull . . . .

Equally puzzling is the report by L.T. Husak, a former signalman at NKVD headquarters in Kiev, who testified that "From the window [he] saw trucks loaded to the top with corpses . . . covered with canvas. . . . To prevent blood from flowing . . . , the bottoms of the trucks were also lined with canvas." The question is, how did Husak know these details and know about the corpses? Similarly, another witness who grazed cows less than 20 yards from the fence "knew they were taking corpses behind the green fence" to Bykivnia, though one of the villagers "told the commission that the fence was solidly built, without a single crack." Mr. Carynnyk also does not explain why the NKVD did not cover its tracks and permitted grazing so close to the fence. Is it possible the NKVD had no secrets?

Similarly, it is hard to believe that the Germans, during their occupation of Kiev, having forced a woman to dig up graves in Bykivnia and finding the corpses of a young woman with a child in her arms, would simply stop the digging and show no further interest in the victims. Was there no propaganda value for them in this incident as there was in Katyn, for example?

There are further inconsistencies:

1. The year is 1941 and the number of victims is said to be 6,329, but in 1989 the former tram-driver, D.A. Makarenko, speculates that there were 120,000 buried at Bykivnia—a figure greater than that of Babi Yar. And a retired economist named Mykola Lysenko estimates that 225,000 victims perished in Bykivnia. The figure keeps growing. . . .

2. Another mass grave in Dnepropetrovsk is also blamed on the NKVD, since the clothing on the bodies dates from 1940 or 1941 (though in a later incident we are told that NKVD victims were undressed before execution). Moreover, if the executions took place in 1941 we must bear in mind that the Germans as well as the Soviets were masters of the Ukraine, and 1,500,000 Jews died there.

3. Next we learn that the Ukraine is a heap of bones, but whose bones are they? Here for the first time Mr. Carynnyk describes the typical execution mode of the NKVD, a bullet to the nape of the neck and when required one to the forehead. But this was also the exact method employed by the Nazis.

4. A mass grave of 520 bodies is discovered in Western Ukraine south of Ivano-Frankivsk (formerly Stanislawow, Poland). Here the killings are again blamed on the NKVD. This particular mass grave, however, reminded me of one described in my book *Inheritance*. I remember it well—the victims were Jewish men, women, and children. I also remember that the Ukrainians there did their "work" with alacrity. They in turn were led by a number of Germans who drove the victims to the site. Martin Gilbert's *Atlas of the Holocaust* (Map 86) shows the following number of Jewish victims for September-October 1941: Odessa 48,000; Kiev 33,771; Vinnitsa 28,000; Uman 24,000; Dnepropetrovsk 15,000; Radomyshl 13,020; Stanislawow 10,000. These German and Ukrainian killings were augmented by Hungarian and Romanian troops and Polish partisans.

5. Back in Poltava, in the east-central Ukraine, there next unfolds an unbelievable story about one Pavlo Mazur, a Pole who was shot as a spy by the NKVD but managed to escape. With the bullet still in his neck and without clothing or travel permit, he survived and sought shelter in Donetsk, a long way from Poltava even for a man with a car. Betrayed, Mazur was finally executed by the NKVD. . . .

6. Further mass graves like the ones in Bykivnia are discovered in Vinnytsia, southwest of Kiev. Here, too, the victims were killed supposedly by the NKVD with a bullet to the back of the neck, but here,

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unlike the mass graves at Dnepropetrovsk, the victims are naked. Once again, German crimes against the Jews are blamed on the NKVD. (It is worth noting in this connection that some time in 1943 the Germans, short of materials, began collecting the clothing of victims, a "technique" which reached its high point at Auschwitz, where nothing was wasted. Prior to that time, victims were killed in their clothing or else their clothing was collected by collaborators as a reward for diligence.)

7. Mr. Carynnyk next cites the report of an eyewitness named Lastovetsky who claims that because his father worked in an NKVD garage, he had been permitted as a boy to wander around the NKVD building past midnight, though others were forbidden even to come close to the building. The boy . . . was supposedly present during an execution that took place in two stages, with the last victims shot by an NKVD officer standing behind a screen. And we are expected to believe that the NKVD would have let him survive with all their secrets. . . .

8. Finally, we are told that before leaving Bykivnia the Germans demolished the buildings and the people "tore down the fence to patch their cottages and sheds" so that, as in Sobibor and Treblinka, all traces of the killing fields were removed. But here, too, if the Germans and the villagers were innocent, would it not have been in their interest to preserve the place as an alibi for the future and not to remove all signs of the killings? . . .

As a climax to his article, Mr. Carynnyk describes a meeting in 1989 at which 30 rubles were collected to bring Lazar Kaganovich, a Jew who had been Minister of Heavy Industry under Stalin and later Malenkov and Khrushchev, to Bykivnia to testify about crimes committed in the Ukraine. To protect the honor of the Ukrainians, the intellectuals at Bykivnia blame the Jew Kaganovich (the 30 rubles are an echo of the New Testament's 30 pieces of silver) for the crimes of Stalin and Khrushchev. . . . The killers are thus "cleansed" of their sins, and the anti-Semite Khrushchev, who carried out Stalin's orders scrupulously, is left clean.

Finally, to drive the point home Mr. Carynnyk quotes the historian Roy Medvedev that Kaganovich is as guilty as the Nazis hanged in 1946. He even chides Gorbachev for not punishing the ninety-six-year-old man for his "crimes," though Kaganovich, who lives in Moscow, has yet to be accused by a serious historian of any offense. . . . Now, after most of the killing-field survivors are dead, the guilty collaborators blame an old Jew for their crimes. The crimes committed by Stalin's other henchmen are not even mentioned. . . .

JAN REYNOLDS
Bronx, New York

MARCO CARYNNYK writes:

Although "The Killing Fields of Kiev" dealt with Jews and Ukrainians only in its final paragraphs, both Iwan Lozowy and Jan Reynolds have read it as a homily on the complicated and often painful relations between the two peoples. Such articles, writes Mr. Lozowy, can be "a first step toward recognition and mutual understanding." The killings I described, Mr. Reynolds argues, did not take place; my purpose was to deny the Holocaust. But before I discuss these larger issues, I must dispose of some of Mr. Reynolds's lesser criticisms.

Mr. Reynolds objects to my phrase about the sweet stench of decomposing corpses. The sweet stench that he remembers came from the chimneys at Birkenau. Is he perhaps trying to say that no one was buried at Bykivnia?

I did not write, as Mr. Reynolds says that I did, that "a German official . . . unearthed the bodies in Bykivnia but showed no interest," and I did not write elsewhere that this took place much later. Several people who lived through the occupation have recalled that reports about the mass graves at Bykivnia appeared in the German-controlled press, but I did not find any mentions in the few newspapers that were available to me and so did not discuss the matter.

Mr. Reynolds dismisses my description of grave robbers defiling Bykivnia: "Those of us who survived these killing fields witnessed only the destruction of Jewish mass graves, since local grave robbers respected known Christian burial grounds and cemeteries. . . ." In addition to the accounts of witnesses, I have two-dozen photographs taken several years ago, before the site was cleaned up, which clearly show scattered skulls, many of them with bullet holes.

Mr. Reynolds wonders how L. T. Husak could have known about the corpses that were loaded onto trucks and covered with canvas before being taken to Bykivnia. The answer is in the text: Husak worked at NKVD headquarters and observed what was going on.

How could a peasant who grazed cows near the green fence have known that corpses were taken there when the fence had no cracks in it? Mr. Reynolds asks. The answer, once again, is in the article: residents of Bykivnia saw the trucks that regularly drove there, and boys climbed trees in order to peer over the fence.

Mr. Reynolds rejects the story of Pavlo Mazur, who was shot by the NKVD. How could he have traveled from Poltava to Donetsk with a bullet in his neck and without clothes or a travel permit? The source is the NKVD record of Mazur's interrogation after his rearrest which makes it clear that he did obtain clothing. And people have been known to survive a serious bullet wound. The record makes no mention of how Mazur traveled without a permit or ticket. Did he perhaps bribe a conductor, or did he simply travel illegally, as so many people did?

The inconsistency in the various estimates of the number of people buried at Bykivnia is part of the problem that I was describing. A thorough excavation of the entire site has not been carried out, and we have only the figure of 6,329 corpses offered by the Soviet government, the estimate of 120,000 by a retired tram-driver who saw the convoys of trucks in the late 1930's, and the calculation of 225,000 by Mykola Lysenko, who has measured the site.

There is no inconsistency, however, in the fact that at some sites the victims were found with their clothes on and in others were undressed. The methods used in peacetime, when the NKVD felt that it was in control, and just before the German occupation, when haste was essential, were simply different. Placement of the gun muzzle also varied: many witnesses say that the practice was to point it at the nape of the neck, but photographs of remains that I have seen often show bullet holes in the top of the head or the forehead.

As for the fence and buildings that were torn down at Bykivnia, the Germans and the villagers, who had nothing to do with the killings there, had no need for an "alibi."

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In seizing on these apparent discrepancies in the accounts of eyewitnesses and survivors, Mr. Reynolds shows that he does not understand what I was doing: fully aware that memory is fallible and that the reconstruction of any historical event requires reconciliation of contradictions, I quoted those accounts because they are valuable as testimony to suffering and because on the main points they are remarkably similar.

On more important issues, Mr. Reynolds charges me with ignoring the fact that Ukrainians were not Stalin's only victims and that the chain of killings stretched from Vladivostok to Mexico. A closer reading of my article will show Mr. Reynolds how wrong he is. I discussed Stalin's crimes in Ukraine, not his cimes specifically against Ukrainians, and I am aware, having written in the conclusion that "more than 100,000 unmarked mass graves are scattered across the Soviet Union," that the killings extend far beyond Ukraine.

I am also aware of the anti-Semitic implications of a campaign that demands punishment only for Lazar Kaganovich and ignores his Gentile collaborators, and I drew attention to them in my article. But I am not as ready to exculpate Kaganovich as Mr. Reynolds is when he argues that Kaganovich was only Minister of Heavy Industry under Stalin and "has yet to be accused by a serious historian of any offense." Is Roy Medvedev insufficiently serious?

Although I referred to the 1933 famine only to establish the immediate background to the events I was describing, Mr. Reynolds censures my reference to five to seven million victims and my linking of them to the NKVD. Once again, a more careful reading will show him that I made no such link: the GPU, as the secret police was known then, was not the chief instrument for implementing the policies that brought about the famine. And I did not make up those figures in order to diminish or deny the Holocaust. They come from observers of the time.

Despite the Soviet government's policy of restricting travel by foreigners, diplomats, journalists, and tourists did visit the famine-stricken regions, and some of them later provided estimates of mortality. These estimates were impressionistic: the visitor would see a few regions of the country, calculate what percentage of the population had died, and then extrapolate the figure to arrive at a total estimate. The American journalist Ralph Barnes estimated in this fashion that at least one million people had died. Walter Duranty, the New York *Times* correspondent, publicly reported a toll of four million, but privately spoke of seven and even ten million. The American reporters Maurice Hindus, Stephen Duggan, and Frederick Birchall spoke about three to four million deaths. The British historian Bernard Pares and the American journalists Eugene Lyons, Whiting Williams, and William Henry Chamberlain cited a figure of five million victims. Harry Lang, a correspondent for the New York *Forward*, mentioned six million. The German agricultural expert Otto Schiller gave a figure of 7.5 million, and Richard Sallet calculated ten million.

Working with recently released census statistics, scholars have been arriving at figures that correspond roughly to the average—5.5 million—of the estimates made by the observers. The Soviet Ukrainian economist Serhii Pyrozhkov has offered a figure of 5.7 million "direct and indirect" losses in Ukraine in the 1930's. Working with Stephen Wheatcroft and Aleksandr Babenyshev, the historian Stanislav Kulchytsky has calculated that "direct losses" were close to four million and that "indirect losses" (the decrease in the birth rate) raise the total to between four and 4.5 million. These figures are for Ukraine only and do not include losses elsewhere, especially in the North Caucasus and the Volga. Other scholars, I should add, argue that these figures are too low. The demographic debate continues.

Mr. Reynolds asserts that the Ukrainian peasants had the choice of accepting or resisting collectivization and were thus, he implies, morally less worthy than Hitler's Jewish victims, whose "fate was sealed." Those who died in the lumber camps of the Far North after being deported during the dekulakization campaign of 1930-32 certainly had no choice. Of those who remained, 70 percent were forced to join the collective farms by January 1932 and also had no choice. By claiming that they did have a choice, Mr. Reynolds is playing the old trick of blaming the victims and exonerating their oppressors. Like the Holocaust deniers who argue about the kind of gas that was or was not used in the extermination camps, he is implying that mass murder does not matter.

But what do the statistics, even if they were verified down to the last digit, tell us about suffering? Although Mr. Reynolds interprets my remarks as a claim that Soviet Ukrainians under Stalin suffered more than Jews under Hitler, I have no way of telling who suffered more, and I conclude only that innocent people were murdered at Bykivnia and those responsible should be brought to trial.

In my research and reading over the years I have repeatedly encountered two parallel myths. First, few Ukrainians know much about the Holocaust or have any feeling for the trauma and aloneness of the Jews in that dark period. One Ukrainian told me in all earnestness that the Jewish victims of the Holocaust were more fortunate than the Ukrainians who died in the famine: they died quickly, the woman said, without the prolonged agonies of starvation.

Ignorance engenders prejudice. Some Ukrainians are convinced that Jews organized the Communist oppression of their homeland and engineered the famine of the early 1930's. As proof they cite figures about the number of Jews in the party, the bureaucracy, and the secret police. Some maintain that not a single Jew was affected by the famine (although there is evidence that Jewish collective farms in southern Ukraine were wiped out and that the small towns, where Jews were concentrated, also suffered). Some even claim that Jews organized the famine, that Stalin at first knew nothing about their plans and that when he did find out, he moved quickly to punish the guilty. This variant of the prerevolutionary myth of the kindly czar and his evil advisers would be laughable if it weren't for the fact that some people are prepared to draw such odious—and potentially murderous—conclusions from it.

If you speak to people who lived through the years of collectivization, famine, and purges in Ukraine, they will sometimes tell you, though only if they think they can trust you, that all the Jews in the village packed up their belongings and left before the trouble started, implying with a sly glance that they had been warned in good time by those who were planning the trouble and that the men who came

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in the winter night to throw the family out of the farmstead with only the clothes on their backs were Jews. But if you ask, "How did you know they were Jews?" you will hear in reply only a dissembling murmur: "They looked Jewish. They were strangers in the village, and they spoke Russian and wore city clothes. They must have been Jews." Today these people feel that Jews are continuing to persecute them by seeking out war criminals. Why, such people ask, are they not seeking out their own criminals, the Jews in the ranks of the NKVD, the Kaganoviches who master-minded Stalin's starvation and deportation?

Second, the Jewish stereotype of Ukrainians—Mr. Reynolds dwells on it at length in his book *Inheritance*; "no other people in our time have hated the Israelites more," he writes—is equally vicious: they are bloody-minded peasants at their best, incarnations of wartime criminality at their worst. After all, they helped the Nazis exterminate the Jews, shocking even SS officers with the fervor with which they raped children and slit open women's bellies. How did the survivors know that they were Ukrainians? Why, they had slanted eyes, they spoke an outlandish language, and their first names were Ivan. Sometimes, as in the case of a reviewer of Stuart Kahan's *The Wolf of the Kremlin*, the argument acquires ominous overtones: it is all right to kill people, especially Ukrainians, if you are a Jew and have encountered anti-Semitism.

All too often, then, Jews and Ukrainians have been fighting World War II all over again. A millennium of ignorance and contempt has culminated in decades of intolerance and bias. Prisoners of prejudice Jews and Ukrainians were before the famines, purges, and extermination camps of this century. Prisoners of prejudice they remain.

As oppressed peoples, neither able to sympathize with the other's particular form of suffering, Ukrainians and Jews share a feature that has escaped the attention of most observers—the self-absorption that often accompanies victimization. As the Holocaust has become a cardinal doctrine in Jewish thought, so the experience of victimization, perhaps to a lesser degree and at a slower pace, has been shaping the Ukrainian identity. Convinced that one acquires special moral standing by having been victimized, both peoples believe that any attention to the claims of others diminishes their own rectitude. Sometimes they go even further and conclude that their enemy's enemy is not as black as he is made out to be.

Low self-esteem, feelings of oppression and helplessness, may be the reason for such attitudes. To emphasize their sense of separateness, their superior status, many Ukrainians and Jews have attacked the group closest to them in class and culture. This, I suspect, is the key to Mr. Reynolds's repeated insinuations that the killings I was writing about did not take place.

And yet for all his vehemence and bias I think I understand what Mr. Reynolds feels because I feel the same way about my people. I remain calm when I hear about persecution of Jews; I become indignant when Ukrainian suffering is mentioned. It was tempting when I read the daily accounts of John Demjanjuk's trial in Jerusalem to believe that he was not really guilty or, at least, to be comforted by the conclusion that he was not being given a fair trial, that the main evidence against him—the infamous Trawniki identification card—was a Soviet forgery, and to nod in assent to the pleas to forget the elderly war criminals among us and to turn our attention to more recent crimes. Evenhandedness in these matters is impossible to attain.

But these are private feelings, not prescriptions for political action. Perhaps we can never be entirely rid of our prejudices, but we can try to identify and control them. Professions of love and respect are useless. We have to start by identifying bigotry where we see it; we have to admit that mutual hatred is a continuing force.

Marie Syrkin Fellowship

To the Editor of Commentary:

I am pleased to announce the establishment of the Marie Syrkin Fellowship in Letters in Jerusalem, in memory of the late Marie Syrkin, poet, essayist, teacher, and Zionist leader. The Fellowship will provide for a month's residence for a writer in Jerusalem at Mishkenot Shaananim, the restored 19th-century "tranquil dwellings" opposite the Old City walls, as well as transportation costs. The Fellowship is open to writers in all the forms, though the judges will honor Marie Syrkin's preference for belles-lettres over scholarly research. The judges for 1991 are Irving Howe, Cynthia Ozick, and myself. Inquiries and applications should be sent to: The Marie Syrkin Fellowship, 1220 19th Street NW, Suite 600, Washington, D.C. 20036.

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Good News About American Education

Barbara Lerner

In recent opinion polls, more than nine out of ten Americans said they were "disturbed" about indications that our students and workers are having trouble competing with their foreign counterparts. Six in ten viewed these developments with "serious alarm." In May of last year, 75 percent said that "the U.S. is in a state of decline compared with Japan, West Germany, and other leading European and Asian countries." Clearly, the "Morning in America" mood of a decade ago is gone.

Actually, with regard to education, as many commentators have pointed out, there is both bad news and good news today. But the bad news is very bad, and to most people, the good news does not seem very good, or very important, or relevant to our ability to hold our own in international competition.

I disagree: not about the bad news, but about the good. I think that both the value and the importance of the good news have been vastly underrated, especially by experts, and that its relevance to our international problems has been missed entirely. This is less surprising than it appears. Many experts had high hopes for the so-called Excellence Movement of the 1980's; but the good news is not really a product of that movement. It is a dividend from the reform movement that preceded it, the Reform of 1976.

The only education-reform movement of the last three decades that worked, the Reform of 1976 was a Cinderella from the start, and though its results are still coming in, its significance has yet to be appreciated. The experts who were nearly unanimous in denouncing its methods at the outset are nearly unanimous today in dismissing its results as trivial. They are sure it has nothing to teach us about how to prepare American students for the 21st century.

I am convinced that it does.

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The Bad News: Two Failed Reforms

The Excellence Movement of the 1980's was the most recent in a string of conflicting educational reforms that have kept American schools in turmoil for the last thirty years. When the turmoil began in the 1960's, the American people were not concerned about excellence. They took its presence for granted, at least among advantaged students. So did the experts in psychology, education, and other social sciences. They focused instead on self-esteem, the critical variable (they said) for all intellectual development, the master key to learning.

The job of educators, the reformers of the 1960's accordingly told us, was to raise self-esteem; if we did that, excellence would take care of itself. The self-esteem they had in mind, however, was not earned self-esteem but what I have elsewhere referred to as the "feel-good-now" variety; and the means they favored involved the wholesale trashing of academic and disciplinary standards seen as injurious to it.

The results of this approach were soon apparent. Scores on all major norm-referenced tests of academic ability from the 5th grade on began to decline in the second half of the 1960's and continued to slide downhill at an accelerating rate throughout the 1970's. The long decline finally came to an end in 1980, when American scores stabilized at a point more than half a standard deviation* below the level of the 1950's and the early 1960's.

The initial reaction to the decline was mixed. Some experts saw it as a serious setback for American education and called for a restoration of academic standards and discipline; others called for a war on the tests that recorded the decline,

* The standard deviation (SD) is the square root of the total amount of variation among all scores in any set of scores (the variance). To get a sense of its magnitude, assume a drop of 1 SD between students in 1960 and 1980: only about 15 percent of students in 1980 would score above the 1960 mean; about 85 percent would score below it. In the actual difference at issue here, half an SD, about 30 percent of today's students score above the old mean, about 70 percent below it.

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insisting that they were unfair and irrelevant. Although hard empirical data indicated that such charges against the tests were false, the evidence was quite technical and abstract, and few outside the business- and industrial-psychology community really understood it. As a result, it had relatively little impact on the public debate or its resolution.

What tipped the scales of public policy against the anti-testing coalition and galvanized the Excellence Movement of the 1980's was the news that on nineteen international tests, U.S. students never ranked first or second and, in comparison with other developed nations, came in last seven times. In the worst cases, the test-score gap between American adolescents and their European and Asian peers was a full standard deviation wide.

I broke that news in an article in the *Public Interest* in 1982. The data on which I based my conclusions had been collected in the late 1960's and in the 1970's, but had been misanalyzed, then buried. *A Nation at Risk*, the Report of a National Commission on Excellence in Education appointed by President Reagan, came out the next year. It highlighted my conclusions and used them to launch the education-reform movement of the 1980's.

President Reagan's Commission called for a long list of specific reforms. His Department of Education under William J. Bennett provided high-profile cheerleaders for the movement and, in a booklet entitled *What Works*, an even longer list of suggested reforms. Elected officials in all 50 states embraced the movement with enthusiasm and made substantial commitments to it, with strong support from the business community. Most of the reforms were in fact implemented in most states, some in all.

The decade is over now, and the results are in. Data from good domestic tests like the SAT show that in an absolute sense we did not really get worse in the 1980's as we had done in the 1960's and 70's, but neither did we get much better. For the most part we stood still, stuck on the plateau we had reached in 1980. Our foreign competitors, however, did not stand still; they surged ahead, rapidly, so that the worst-case gap between our children and theirs is no longer one standard deviation, but closer to two.

This time, the news of our failure was promptly and accurately reported, but it did not galvanize. It discouraged. Americans no longer take excellence for granted, and they have a profound new grasp of the relationship between educational failure and economic decline. The growing dominance of foreign companies in product market after product market has brought the point home to ordinary Americans.

Today, those ordinary Americans are clear about the urgency of the need to do better, but they do not know how, and they do not believe the experts do, either. Some fear that nothing we can do will really change the bottom line, and a surprising number of experts agree, in private. Increasing numbers believe that only a shrinking minority of our students will ever really be able to attain excellence. That is the bad news, and it is pretty bad.

The Good News: The Cinderella Reform

THE good news is, first, that minimum competence—literacy and numeracy, basically—is now nearly universal among our high-school graduates. And, second, while the SAT scores of American students in general have stayed pretty much the same for a decade, those of minority students have not. From 1980 to 1989, Hispanic and Asian scores on such advanced tests rose by about a quarter of a standard deviation, black scores by almost half a standard deviation.

Yet there is not much cheer in any of this, the experts agree. After all, we are not going to close the yawning international gap with minimum competence. For that, we need advanced competence—the kind we measure with tests like the SAT, ASVAB, and the GATB, which go beyond literacy and numeracy to measure reasoning and problem-solving with words and with numbers. On such tests, most American students made no real gains at all, while the gains made by minority students on those same advanced tests were not enough to close the domestic gap between minority and majority scores, let alone the international gap between us and other developed nations. That, at any rate, is the usual expert appraisal of the good news about how American students are doing as we enter the 90's.

My own appraisal is different. Viewed in a vacuum, the news that minimum competence is now nearly universal among American high-school graduates does not seem much of an accomplishment. But if we look back to where we stood in the early 1970's, we see that we have not gone downhill or gotten stuck on a plateau, but have had major positive change.

Twice in the early 70's the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) gave a test of functional literacy to national samples of 17-year-olds who were still in school. Minimum-competence tests generally require literacy with numbers as well as with words, but NAEP's 1975 test, like its 1971 test, contained only verbal questions and consisted solely of easy items based on the types of reading materials encountered in everyday life, things like heating instructions on frozen food, and safety signs in shops. It was the sort of test on which the only good score is a perfect score. Students who got less than 90 percent right were classified as semi-literate; those who got less than 75 percent right as illiterate.

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In 1975, the better of the two years, 12.6 percent were illiterate and 44.4 percent semi-literate. Among students whose parents had not completed high school, more than 20 percent were illiterate and more than 60 percent semi-literate. Among black students, more than 40 percent were illiterate and more than 80 percent semi-literate.

Contrast that with NAEP's findings today: virtually universal literacy *and* numeracy among 17-year-olds who remain in school, regardless of race or parental education. Black high-school graduates, especially, have made a really dramatic turnaround. Whereas, in 1975, less than 20 percent of them were fully literate in the reading-only, minimum-competence sense, today almost all of them are fully literate, and they can all do basic math as well. In state after state, black students made that turnaround as a group, almost all of them, all at once, and in just a few short years. It happened in the late 1970's and the very early 1980's, just before the Excellence Movement was launched in 1983. And it happened as a result of a very different kind of reform movement, a grass-roots movement with no national leadership at all.

This movement took off at the local level in 1976, and by 1980 it had spread to 38 states. It was called the Minimum Competence Testing Movement, and it was, in essence, a popular uprising. It was also the only successful education-reform movement of the last three decades.

The success it had is exactly the sort of success we need at the advanced competence level—a big, quick, forward step for all our students, all at once. A step like that would get us off the plateau we have been stuck on since 1980; would change our international ranking; and, by laying a lot of fears to rest, would have a calming effect on some of our most divisive and wrenching internal disputes. To achieve such a success, we need to apply the methods of the Minimum Competence Movement to our problems with advanced competence. But to do that, we must first convince education experts that these methods are worthy of more respectful attention than they have heretofore received.

Cinderella and the Experts

WHY do the experts fail to see the Minimum Competence Movement as a model for education reform? At first glance, the answer may seem obvious: the movement set a minimum standard, and most experts, liberals and conservatives alike, think that standard was easy to meet, much too easy to teach us anything about how to help our students meet a higher standard.

Yet the obvious answer looks a lot less obvious to anyone who rereads what these same experts were saying a decade ago about the odds against getting almost all our students to meet the *minimum*-competence standard. They did not say it was easy then; they said it was impossible.

The Minimum Competence Movement made the opposite assumption. In fact, its essence, its key demand, was that *no* student be given a high-school diploma without first passing a test showing that he could read everyday English and do simple arithmetic. It was the demand mainly of parents who were anguished about the fact that millions of their children were graduating from high school without the competence to go to the grocery store with a shopping list and come back with the right items and the right change. They were determined to change that, and convinced that a required exit test would produce the result they demanded.

Most experts were appalled, and spoke out against the movement loudly and often in meetings, conferences, and speeches, in professional journals and the popular press, and in the federal courts as well. Liberal and conservative experts who agreed on nothing else agreed that this was a primitive and simplistic response to a very complex problem. Requiring a passing grade on a test for a high-school diploma could not possibly solve that problem because it would not even begin to deal with any of the underlying factors that caused it, factors like low self-esteem, poverty, family breakdown, cultural disadvantages and mismatches, and, of course, racism, not to mention poor schools, inadequate teachers, and a lack of appropriate educational content, methods, and resources. Nor would a test requirement for high-school graduation produce an improvement in student performance. It was a totally ineffective way of trying to deal with academic failure. It could not help anyone; it could only hurt, and it was naive or disingenuous to argue otherwise.

There was near unanimity on another point, too. The students who would be hurt the most, experts said, were minority students. Disproportionate numbers of them would fail the test and be denied high-school diplomas. That would stigmatize them for life, do severe damage to their self-esteem and motivation, and close off all further academic and career opportunities, locking them into a permanent underclass. The result would be a widening of the gap between the haves and the have-nots in American society, deepening our racial divisions and moving us away from equality and justice.

The experts were certain that a prime reason for the great popular appeal of so benighted a movement was public ignorance. Many thought it also reflected the underlying racism of American society. And because they were sure it would have an adverse impact on minority students, they were also sure that it must be unconstitutional. A legal challenge in Florida, *Debra P.* v. *Turlington*, provided the test case. The experts argued their

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position in the federal district court there, and they won, initially. In 1979, Judge George C. Carr issued a temporary injunction against the denial of high-school diplomas to students who failed Florida's minimum-competence test. The experts were back in court in 1983, asking Judge Carr to make the injunction permanent. But he did not. Instead he lifted it, reversing his earlier judgment and holding that the minimum-competence requirement was not a burden on minority students but a benefit, one that would help them overcome the legacy of past discrimination.

I did not testify in *Debra P.* in 1979; I did in 1983, and Judge Carr was kind enough then to credit my testimony for his changed views on several key points. But it was the results of the Minimum Competence Movement itself that must have had the greatest impact on him. On the first few tries, 80 to 90 percent of Florida's minority students failed the test. But they were not crushed, as the experts predicted they would be, and they did not give up and drop out in droves without diplomas. They kept trying, and their teachers did too, working hard to help them learn from failure and, ultimately, to master the skills they needed to graduate. By the fifth try, better than 90 percent of them did just that. They left school not just with a piece of paper, but in possession of basic skills that prepared them better for life than their older siblings had been when they left the same schools in the early 1970's. Not yet well-prepared, but significantly better prepared.

The new graduates were, by and large, the same students who had failed the test on their first few tries; the dropout rate did not go up. The teachers were the same and the test was, too; it did not get easier. Student self-esteem was not raised—flunking a test is not an ego-inflating experience—and none of the other presumed causes of poor academic performance changed either, at least not for the better. Poverty, cultural clashes, and racism remained very real problems; family breakdowns increased, to frightening levels. So did crime. These were, after all, the years when the hard-drug epidemic burst on the scene.

Florida's students somehow managed to surmount all that. They wanted their diplomas, knew what they had to do to get them, and they did it. And what happened in Florida happened all across the nation, wherever the minimum-competence sanction was in force. Clearly, the experts were wrong. None of their dire predictions about the impact of the movement was borne out. Its effects, especially for minority students, were uniformly positive.

Why Minimums Work at the Basic Level

WHAT did the reformers of '76 get right that the reformers of '83 would get wrong?

Both movements arose, in large part, as reactions against the education reforms of the 1960's. Both rejected the core belief of the 60's reformers: that raising self-esteem is, in and of itself, an effective way to promote intellectual development. Both rejected the main corollary of that belief, the idea that academic standards, as embodied in tests, grades, and requirements, are not necessary or helpful but actually retard intellectual development, because they damage self-esteem. At the heart of both the Minimum Competence Movement and the Excellence Movement were a rejection of these ideas, a reaffirmation of faith in the utility of academic standards, and a call for the restoration of those standards. One call was heeded; the other was not.

The difference in the height of the standards each movement set was one critical factor, and the most obvious, but close analysis reveals at least four others.

First, the Minimum Competence Movement set a single, unitary standard, defined it clearly, measured success or failure in achieving it with a single test, and tied it tightly to a powerful incentive: high-school graduation. It focused on two skills, reading and arithmetic, and demanded that all students master them at the level it set, and that all demonstrate their mastery by passing the same test.

Second, the standard was pure, in the sense that it told students and teachers what they had to do, how it would be measured, and what consequences would follow, but said nothing at all about how students and teachers were to go about the task. Choices about teaching and learning methods and materials were left to teachers and students. Likewise, organization: school staff members were free to structure their activities and relationships in any way they chose, so long as they produced the mandated result.

Third, the message to every student was: "You need these skills to be a contributing member of our society and our society needs your contribution. These skills are so central to your ability to make that contribution that we won't let you move ahead without them. All the other worthy goals you and your teachers may have must be pursued in addition to, not instead of, the achievement of minimum competence in reading and arithmetic. No other evidence of its achievement is acceptable: if you want to graduate, you must pass our test."

Fourth, the message to teachers had the same bare-bones honesty, along with an appropriate dose of humility. It said: "Our goal is clear, the route to it is not. Teaching is an art, not a science. We don't think there is a single right way for you to proceed in all instances, and we don't pretend to know one. We count on you, on your professional skill and creativity, to find a way to get every student to reach the goal we have set."

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By contrast, the Excellence Movement took a totally different approach to standard-setting. It provided no single definition of excellence, and no operational measure of it. Its proponents were in favor of a lot of good things, some measurable, some not. There was no single overriding standard, but rather a multiplicity of standards with many other things mixed in, many goals and many detailed ideas—about appropriate educational curriculum and content, about school structure and organization—that proponents thought would help students get where they wanted them to go. No real feedback was provided on whether they had actually gotten there; there were no external rewards for those who did, and no consequences for those who did not. The Excellence Movement relied on exhortations and a checklist of new requirements, not on incentives, to produce the result it sought.

All these differences help to explain why the Minimum Competence Movement produced clear positive changes and the Excellence Movement did not. But they offer only a partial explanation of the good news about minimum competence, and no explanation at all for the other piece of good news, the news that minority students made big gains on *advanced* competence tests, too. To explain that, we must focus on why minimum standards are superior to maximum standards for most public purposes.

Why Minimums Work at the Advanced Level

GRAND promises are a standard commodity in American politics—as standard as is the failure to deliver on them. Americans, however, are a realistic people, and when someone promises them the moon, or its educational equivalent—e.g., that all students will soon be "above average"—they tend to discount the promise while giving some credit to the bearer for high hopes and good intentions. As a result, things usually work out for everyone concerned, as long as the underlying realities are not really threatening.

Today, those underlying realities really are threatening. Our standard of living and our place in the world are at risk because our educational system is failing to produce students and workers who can hold their own in global competition. We cannot afford many more years of broken promises in education. We must deliver, and to do that, we must make promises which can be kept, and for which we can be held accountable. Realistic promises about new minimums are such promises.

Some education experts see a danger that the minimum will become the maximum, lowering students' aspirations and efforts. Others remain convinced that it makes more sense to concentrate on raising the ceiling, and encouraging everyone to reach for it, even if they do not expect everyone to succeed. I disagree. If the floor is raised by lifting a house off its foundation onto a new and higher base, the ceiling will rise by itself. This "automatic ceiling effect," as I call it, explains the other piece of good news on the education-reform front: the fact that in the 1980's, the scores of minority students rose by as much as half a standard deviation on *advanced* competence tests like the SAT. A change of that size is significant even if we view it in a vacuum. Viewed in historical context, it is really a giant step forward, and so long overdue that many experts cannot quite believe it now.

The gains of black students were the most dramatic, and the most unexpected. Right after *Brown* v. *Board of Education* in 1954, experts had predicted such dramatic changes in black scores, and were confident that they knew how to effect them. As the years and then the decades passed, the experts remained confident about the worth of at least some of the methods they were using to bring about change, but fewer and fewer remained confident that change would ever come. For no matter how many times the schools of America were turned upside down, black scores stayed stubbornly the same, year after discouraging year. Wherever the experts looked, whatever they did, their early hopes for a quick fix were mocked, their worst fears about the role of genetic differences were energized. To explain the disappointing lack of progress, most fell back on some variant of the centuries-of-slavery thesis, and reluctantly embraced its corollary: that it would take centuries to undo the damage, too.

Black students surprised them by jumping ahead on advanced-competence tests just when least expected, and no one, to my knowledge, has yet offered a cogent explanation of why it happened when it did. I think the automatic-ceiling effect provides the explanation. Setting a functional literacy standard for high-school graduation in most American schools where minorities predominated raised the floor, and the ceiling rose with it. That, I believe, is why more minority students than ever before not only met the minimum but went far beyond it to improve their scores on advanced tests like the SAT.

Illiterate students, after all, have no chance at all of developing the kind of advanced competence with words and numbers that tests like the SAT measure. They cannot even begin to work toward that level until they have first learned to deal with words and numbers at the most basic level. Functional literacy, or minimum competence, is the entry ticket to the race for advanced competence, and as in any race, increasing the number of entrants increases the number who cross the finish line.

Why did setting the minimum-competence requirement at the high-school graduation level not

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have the same effect on white students? Because functional illiteracy is not the norm in many all- or mainly white high schools. The actual number of illiterate white students is, of course, very large; there are so many more white than minority students that even a small percentage in trouble makes for a very big problem. The movement helped these students just as it did minority students, but it only helped them climb up to the floor that most of their classmates were already on. It did not raise the floor, so for whites the ceiling stayed where it was.

A New Set of Minimums

WHAT we need to do now is to raise the floor again, and this time, raise it in a way that lifts all our students onto a higher base. Educators and political leaders in many states have already tried to do that by revising the minimum-competence standard upward. I think they are making a mistake. The minimum-competence standard, and the tests that reflect it, should be retained, because the achievement of basic literacy and numeracy marks a critical turning point in intellectual development, and we need information about how many students reach it, and when.

What I would propose instead is that we make the minimum-competence test the standard for *grade*-school graduation. That would give all our children an incentive, not only to master the basics, but to do so early enough to have at least four years left to work on developing the kind of *advanced* competence they need to succeed in life, as opposed to just getting by. To make sure they do develop it, the standard for high-school graduation should be a minimum score on a test of advanced competence like the SAT, the GATB, or ASVAB.

I single out these three major national tests because they all define advanced competence in the same way: the ability to solve problems by reasoning abstractly with words and numbers. All three also measure in the same way, using written, multiple-choice questions, because that is the fastest, most accurate, and least expensive way to do it.

Most Americans who are concerned about education already have some familiarity with the SAT, which measures the kind of competence critical to success in higher education. That same kind of competence is just as critical to success in business and industry, and is measured by the U.S. Labor Department's GATB; in the military, it is measured by the ASVAB used by the Pentagon. All American students need to develop this kind of competence if they are to advance in life, and they should not be allowed to graduate from high school without it, irrespectively of whether they plan to go to college or to work.

Most experts, however, do not believe that all students can achieve advanced competence. In my opinion these experts overestimate the role genes play in intellectual development, and underestimate the role of focused effort and practice. Genes do, of course, play a role, just as they do in the development of musical and athletic ability. Yet the sound advice, from athletic coaches and music teachers alike, is "practice, practice, practice."

Other nations do not share the American prejudice that intellegence is a fixed and unchanging phenomenon. Japanese parents, for example, see hard work, not talent, as the main ingredient in intellectual development. And well they might: in the first few decades after World War II, Japanese schools used a combination of tough standards and strong incentives, and even though the gene pool in that unusually homogeneous nation did not change at all, the IQ's of Japanese children rose substantially. Western European nations have also managed to raise their national IQ's by substantial amounts in just the last few decades, in spite of a large influx of low-scoring immigrant children, many of them the offspring of guest-workers from underdeveloped countries.

There is no reason to believe that Americans cannot do the same thing, by applying the lessons of the Minimum Competence Movement. For high-school graduation, I would require the equivalent of an SAT score of at least 700 (out of a possible 1600), for college entrance the equivalent of 750, and for college graduation 800. I would also let American high-school students know exactly what is required of them by giving the exit test to all entering freshman. I would give them their scores, too, so they would know where they were as well as where they needed to go, and I would do so again at the end of each year so that they and their parents and teachers could chart their progress.

If these standards were put in place, broadly, and maintained at least at these levels throughout most of the 1990's, it would be safe to predict a significant across-the-board rise in American intellectual competence. By the year 2000 a gain of half a standard deviation would seem likely, and a gain of a full standard deviation quite possible.

Given the link between test scores and economic productivity, there is little doubt that American productivity would also rise, with all the attendant benefits.

An Iatrogenic Illness

BUT I want to deal, once more, with the fear that the intellectual minimums I advocate will be impossible for many minority students to meet; if all the special efforts made to help black students in the years after *Brown* failed to produce any positive change, maybe

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change simply is not possible in this area, at least not now, or soon? Yet consider the possibility that black students failed to improve precisely *because* of those efforts, and that they are just now beginning to recover from the educational equivalent of an iatrogenic illness. Iatrogenic illnesses are caused by treatment; common in the clinical world, they exist in the educational world, too. Malice is not the issue here. Educational experts gave black children the same medicine they gave white children, only more of it. The problem is that many of their ideas turned out to be as wrong-headed as they were well-intentioned—as evidenced in the 1960's and 1970's by the big score declines of white students.

Consider, too, the message about tests that dominant groups of American experts and policymakers have been sending to minority children for the last three decades. Most recently, a Ford Foundation report on testing in general, and a National Academy of Sciences report on the GATB in particular, have said, in a more polished and restrained tone, the same thing the National Education Association and Ralph Nader used to say more aggressively: in effect, "You can't do well on these narrow, biased, standardized tests, and you shouldn't have to, because they're not really fair and they're not really important." In fact, as we have seen, they really are important, critically important, if we are to maintain our standard of living and our place in the world in the next century. Surely the time has come to level with our children about the fact and to send all of them a new and different message: that they can and must do better, for our sake, as well as for theirs.

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Israel, America & Arab Delusions

Daniel Pipes

In mid-January, as the first bombs began to fall on Iraq, Saddam Hussein and his partisans continued to offer two strikingly contrary interpretations of their war with the U.S.-led alliance. Sometimes—especially when justifying their own gratuitous missile attacks on Israel—the Iraqis have presented the entire conflict as a great conspiracy hatched by Zionists and executed by their American stooge. "This war that is being waged against us is a Zionist war," said Saddam Hussein in a television interview at the end of January, "only here, Zionism is fighting us through American blood." But when Baghdad has wanted to paint President Bush as the "arch-Satan" in the White House, Israel has then shriveled into America's "evil cat's-paw." Obviously, only one of these characterizations of Israel can be true: either it steers Washington's Middle East policy or it serves American imperial interests—but not both.

Similar contradictions have been put forward since the beginning of the Persian Gulf crisis. Thus, on June 24, 1990, just over a month before the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, a Baghdad newspaper complained that the U.S. government merely echoed decisions made in Israel, that it lacked an "independent policy" on the Arab-Israeli conflict. Then, just four days later, on June 28, another Baghdad daily proposed exactly the opposite thesis, proclaiming that the U.S. had for decades "used the Zionist entity as a tool to safeguard its interests in the region."

The Iraqis are not alone in espousing these contradictory positions. Gamal Abdel Nasser, the charismatic Egyptian leader, used to declare that, if not for British help, the idea of a Zionist state would have remained a "madman's fantasy." At the same time he subscribed to an extreme form of Jewish-conspiracy theory: "Three hundred Zionists, each of whom knows all the others, govern the fate of the European continent." His successor, Anwar al-Sadat, likewise could describe Israel as Washington's "gendarme" in the Middle East while on other occasions maintaining that American policy puts "Israel's interests before those of the United States herself."

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The Syrian government of Hafez al-Assad also contradicts itself on relations between the U.S. and Israel. When its ties to Moscow have been strong, Damascus has stressed the dangers of imperialist plots and variously derided Israel as "a U.S. base," America's "big stick," and "a mere U.S. aircraft carrier." In contrast, when Syria has sought to improve relations with Washington, it has blamed "world Jewry" for subverting American policy. "The United States does not have a policy of its own in the Middle East," it has said, but blindly follows directives issued in Tel Aviv.

Similarly with the Palestine Liberation Organization. "The Zionist entity," PLO chairman Yasir Arafat announced in April 1990, "represents the head of the body of hostile world forces inside the Arab nation; its role is to protect the interests of those forces." But Hani al-Hasan, a top Arafat aide, claims that the United States "is governed by the Zionist lobby."

Do Arabs, then, see Israel as the forward bastion of Western interests, or as the covert power behind Western decision-making? Logic requires that either Washington tells Jerusalem what to do or Jerusalem bullies Washington. Yet many Muslims—Arabs and Iranians (though few Turks)—seem to sense no contradiction between these two cherished visions of Israel. They merrily exist side by side—even in the same individual and in the same speech—without so much as a hint of intellectual strain or inconsistency.

Middle Eastern perceptions of Israel's place in the world have profound significance for the Arab conflict with Israel, and so repay careful analysis. That they are so starkly contradictory suggests that, even after a century of the Zionist enterprise, the Muslim peoples of the region still have not settled on a way to understand it. This fact has many implications for Israel, and for the United States.

The notion that Zionism serves as a tool of the Western powers is an old one, going back at least as far as Abdulhamit II, the Ottoman Sultan between 1876 and 1909. His was a reasonable idea: after all, St. Petersburg looked after the interests of Armenians living in his realm, Paris sponsored the Maronites, and London was allied with the Druse, so why not assume that the Jews, or the Zionists, were spon-

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sored too? The trouble was that this assumption happened not to be true.

Nevertheless, the idea persisted: during the Mandatory period (1918-47), endorsement by the British of a Jewish national home in Palestine was interpreted by Muslims primarily as a way for London to protect the Suez Canal and the route to India. With India's independence in 1947, the emphasis shifted to the maintenance of British commerce in the Middle East. According to Egypt's Muslim Brethren, the British assembled "thousands of vagabonds and aliens, bloodsuckers and pimps, and said to them, 'Take for yourselves a national home called Israel.'" Later, when the U.S. government replaced Britain as chief culprit, Washington was retroactively held responsible for the establishment of Israel. Muammar al-Qaddafi of Libya has flatly asserted that "the United States created Israel," supplying it with the weapons and intelligence Israelis need to kill Arabs.

Why did the British and American imperialists want Israel to exist? Arabs have a rich assortment of answers to this question. *Ash-Sha'b,* a leftist Egyptian newspaper, portrays Israel as a branch office of the Central Intelligence Agency, one which requires CIA "approval and support" before taking almost any step. Ahmad Jibril (leader of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command) dubs Israel "America's Mideast aircraft carrier." Khalid al-Hasan, another PLO leader, sees Israel as "something like a conglomerate—General Motors, for example."

And what functions does this intelligence office/aircraft carrier/multinational corporation serve? To jeopardize whatever it may be the speaker holds most dear. Thus, for Nasser, the Pan-Arab leader, Israel endangered Pan-Arab nationalism. His 1962 Charter of National Action dubbed Israel "the tool of imperialism" and "a whip in their hands to fight the struggling Arabs." In 1968 the PLO was still under Nasser's influence, so its Covenant accused Israel of being "a geographic base for world imperialism placed strategically in the midst of the Arab homeland to combat the hopes of the Arab nation for liberation, amity, and progress."

For Nasser's confidant, Mohamed Heikal, Israel's main role was to control the oil trade. He held in 1964 that "the flow of Arab oil is one of the important factors in the establishment of Israel on the soil of the Arabs." Shortly afterward, Yahya Hamuda, Arafat's predecessor as head of the PLO, portrayed Israel as "an instrument of American imperialist colonialism which seeks to appropriate our oil."

For fundamentalist Muslims, Israel is a vehicle to suppress true Islam. Ayatollah Khomeini held that Israel had "penetrated all the economic, military, and political affairs" of Iran with the intention to "annihilate Islam." Hizbullah, the pro-Iranian Lebanese group, characterizes Israel as the "American spearhead in our Islamic world." Hamas, the Palestinian fundamentalist group, accuses the Jews of trying to "liquidate Islam."

Israel is also accused of serving a number of other purposes. Professor Edward Said of Columbia, one of the PLO's unofficial spokesmen, calls Israel "a device for holding Islam—and later the Soviet Union, Communism—at bay." Others point to Israel's alleged part in fomenting counterrevolutionary activities and acting as a center for psychological warfare. Its very existence is seen as forcing the Arabs to invest in war rather than economic development, as diverting their attention from domestic issues, and as providing the reactionaries with the means to stay in power. In their most paranoid moments, some Arabs even worry about genocide.

Curiously, there is also a recessive view in which Israel is regarded not as an instrument of imperialism but as its victim—a place to which a people not wanted in Christian Europe was expelled. This premise inspires some of the wildest speculations of all. Muhammad Mahdi at-Tajir, a United Arab Emirates ambassador to Great Britain, once explained to a British writer: "It is not the Jews who created the state [of Israel]. It is an invention of their enemies, especially the British. When you wanted to get rid of them because you were afraid they would rule Britain, you put the idea in their head of creating a homeland." Qaddafi took the notion one step further, calling the creation of Israel "a big international conspiracy against the Jews." Addressing Jews, he warned them that the Europeans "want to get rid of you and throw you in Palestine for the Arabs to eliminate you some day." To avoid this fate, Qaddafi urged Israelis to "leave Palestine immediately and return to [your] own countries."

To be sure, the notion of Jews as victims has never enjoyed a wide following among Muslims, possibly because it is much less useful than portraying Israel as a monstrous and all-powerful agent of imperialism. This latter view deepens hatred for the enemy, inflates the threat he poses, stimulates xenophobia, and rallies citizens. It turns Israel from a parochial Middle East concern into a global problem, universalizing the Arab cause. It also makes Arab defeat that much more palatable: how can Arabs beat an Israel enjoying British and American support?

Depending on their strategy toward Israel, Arab leaders under the sway of the imperialist myth conceive of Washington either as their principal nemesis or as the way to a solution. Those who plan militarily to destroy Israel are implacably hostile to the U.S. To Qaddafi, Washington is "the bitter enemy until doomsday"; Assad (for all that he has joined forces with Washington against Iraq) deems the U.S. "the main enemy of the Arab nation"; and Baghdad Radio's Voice of the PLO chimes in with "the major enemy . . . both in the past and in the present." But Arab leaders

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intent on dealing diplomatically with Israel draw the opposite conclusion: if Washington makes the key decisions, they had better cultivate it. Sadat and Arafat followed this course in the hope that the Americans would compel Israel to do their bidding.

Whether it casts the U.S. as enemy or ally, the imperialist theory causes Arab leaders to focus too much on the United States and too little on Israel. With the single exception of 1957 (when President Eisenhower forced the Israelis to evacuate the Sinai Peninsula), the expectation of American pressure on Israel has invariably been disappointed. Still, the illusion lives on that the Americans might again, as Arafat puts it, "do what Eisenhower did." Sadat thought that the Americans held "99 percent of the cards" but eventually discovered that he had to negotiate with Menachem Begin, not Jimmy Carter. Alexander Haig was considered pro-Israel; therefore, when he resigned as Ronald Reagan's Secretary of State in June 1982, the PLO was elated. One of Arafat's aides even acknowledged, "I felt as if we had won the war that night." But as the next few months showed, he was wholly mistaken.

Too little attention to Israel leads the Arabs into serious blunders. Nasser concentrated so intently on extruding American influence from the Middle East that he virtually ignored that effect of his actions on Israel. This partially explains how he blundered into the Six-Day War. Similarly, leaders of the *intifada* in the West Bank and Gaza Strip designed their insurrection to win the sympathy of Western television audiences, and did not realize the damage this did to their cause among the Israeli electorate.

If Israel is merely Washington's pawn, then obviously a cherished slogan has to be discarded—that the Jewish lobby drives American policy. Surprisingly, Arab leaders do sometimes (contradicting what they say at most other times) draw this conclusion. Deputy Prime Minister Khaddam of Syria put it clearly in 1981: "There is a deep and organic link between the United States and Israel. We are under no illusions about this. The link is not due to the 'Zionist lobby' in the United States but to the fact that it is the only friend of the United States in the area and because it represents a major base for protecting U.S. interests." In a remarkable statement eight years later, Arafat echoed this outlook. The Kuwaiti News Agency paraphrased him as expressing the belief that "it's the U.S. and not Israel that determines the American policy in the region," and dismissing "as baseless the myth of the Zionist lobby in the United States."

YET it is precisely this idea of an all-powerful "Zionist lobby" that is most commonly invoked to explain the "special relationship" between the United States and Israel, which so mystifies Arabs and Iranians. In 1980 Syria's Khaddam articulated this puzzlement over the fact that the U.S. government seems to favor four million Jews over 150 million Arabs: "What has Israel given the United States? Obviously, nothing, neither oil nor money. The reverse is true. Israel takes everything from the United States. At a time when the Arabs provide the United States with oil, money, and political support, what is the result? U.S. aid to Israel."

As Muslims, these Middle Easterners fail to understand the emotional resonance of a common Bible and a host of Judeo-Christian features. As Middle Easterners, they cannot see beyond the clash of nationalisms to comprehend shared interests between countries. As citizens of authoritarian states, they miss the importance of personal, cultural, and political bonds between free peoples. Perplexed by an alliance that makes no sense to them, they fall back on the theory that Americans do not use Israelis but instead are their dupes.

In a 1944 broadcast on Nazi-controlled Radio Berlin, the Palestinian leader Amin al-Husseini noted the strong support for Zionism found in the U.S. Congress. His comment: "No one ever thought that 140 million Americans would become tools in Jewish hands." The same notion remained common in the postwar years. At the United Nations debate on the partition of Palestine, Faris al-Khuri, dean of the Arab diplomats, held that although Zionists formed only one-thirtieth of the U.S. population, "they have extended their influence into all circles." He warned Americans to "be careful for the future which awaits them." Writing about U.S. politics in his 1951 book, *From Here We Learn*, the Egyptian thinker Muhammad al-Ghazali asserted that "the rudder of higher politics is in the hands of the Jews." Postwar suspicion of Jewish power was so strong, recalls Miles Copeland, the late CIA operative, that American diplomacy in the Arab world during the period 1947-52 consisted largely of trying "to convince the various Foreign Offices that our government was not under the control of the Zionists."

Rana Kabbani is a sophisticated Syrian woman who lived in Washington and studied at Georgetown University; Salman Rushdie praised her study, *Europe's Myths of Orient*, as "an important, fierce, and judicious book"; married to the British journalist Patrick Seale and living in London, she has been described in *Mother Jones* as having "star quality: beauty, brains, and social position." And what did this highly intelligent woman learn during her years in proximity to the institutions of American power? That the simple prejudices bandied about in her homeland were valid. "Every Arab believes that American policy toward the Middle East is made in Tel Aviv, but to discover that this was indeed the case, and not mere paranoia, was a great shock."

Governments repeat this charge, too. "U.S. policy toward the Arabs," declared the Iraqi first Deputy Prime Minister, Taha Yasin Ramadan, "is

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drawn up by Zionist circles." King Hussein of Jordan has publicly blamed the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), the pro-Israel lobby, for wrong-headed American policies in the Middle East. Syrian radio has argued that Israeli power in Washington results from "the Zionists' gold and dollars." According to it, "the Zionists financed election campaigns [of Senators], gave them their racist votes, and continued to provide them with bribes to raise their hands whenever a decision desired by the Zionists needed to be made." And as if that were not enough, the Israeli government "slips dollars into their pockets."

Predictably, Henry Kissinger's Jewish background was interpreted as a mechanism for Israeli control over the American body politic. As Foreign Minister Ismail Fahmy of Egypt put it, Kissinger "was in fact always acting on behalf of Israel." If ever Kissinger dared disagree with the Israeli government, it "brought him quickly into line."

In another, more baroque variation, some Muslims see Communism as a Jewish plot. King Faisal of Saudi Arabia (1905-75) all his adult life collapsed his two hobby-horses, Jews and Communists, into one, and believed in a Zionist-Bolshevik conspiracy against the Arabs. Using that ugly 19th-century forgery, *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, as a proof text, he alleged that "Zionism is the mother of Communism. . . . It's all part of a great plot, a grand conspiracy. Communism . . . is a Zionist creation designed to fulfill the aims of Zionism. They are only pretending to work against each other."

Faisal's obsession caused him to lobby leaders whenever he could, no matter how unsettling the effect. At a White House dinner in his honor, he spent much of the time telling Richard Nixon that Bolshevism was an offspring of Zionism. Faisal came away gratified with the impact he had. "The President," he reported to Mohamed Heikal, "had shown great interest and had asked him to repeat his remarks to Vice President Spiro Agnew and to the director of the CIA, Richard Helms, which he did. The King was obviously pleased at having, as he felt, convinced these powerful figures of a profound and neglected political truth." (In his *Memoirs*, however, Nixon wrote only one dismissive sentence on this topic—"Faisal saw Zionist and Communist conspiracies everywhere around him.")

Two years later, at a state dinner in his Riyadh palace for Secretary of State Kissinger, Faisal publicly harangued his captive guest for two hours, informing him that "Jews and Communists were working now in parallel, now together, to undermine the civilized world as we knew it." He explained that Israel was "the Middle East outpost of that plot . . . put there by Bolshevism for the principal purpose of dividing America from the Arabs." Deeply embarrassed, Kissinger tried to change the subject by asking the King about a picture on the wall. But this gambit failed. It "threw Faisal into some minutes of deep melancholy, causing conversation around the table to stop altogether."

Middle Eastern leaders sometimes portray Israel as a threat not merely to them but to all of humanity. Assad (who to this day shelters Adolf Eichmann's secretary, SS captain Alois Brunner, the leading Nazi fugitive now alive) has described the Zionists as "invaders who are threatening not just the Arab nation but the entire human race." Likewise, senior PLO figures seem sincerely to believe they are doing battle on behalf of all humanity. And the charter of the fundamentalist Palestinian group, Hamas, cites *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* by name and frequently reflects the message of that fraudulent text:

> The enemies . . . have labored to amass astounding and influential material wealth, which has been exploited to realize their dream. They have used their wealth to gain control of the world media, news agencies, the press, broadcasting stations, etc. . . . They were behind the French Revolution and the Communist Revolution. . . . They instigated World War I. . . . They caused World War II. . . . It was they who gave the instructions to establish the United Nations and the Security Council to replace the League of Nations, in order to rule over the world through them.

Taking this argument one step further, some Arabs argue that they must save the West from the clutches of the Zionists. Saddam Hussein once declared that Arab strength vis-à-vis Israel "not only will help liberate ourselves, but . . . will liberate others in the West from the weight of the Zionist pressure they are subjected to."

Three points bear noting. First, each of these two themes contains a kernel of truth. The great powers now and then have expected to benefit from Israel. As early as 1840, British Foreign Minister Lord Palmerston wrote that the return of the Jewish people to Palestine would serve to check "any future evil designs of Mehemet Ali [the ruler of Egypt] or his successor." The Balfour Declaration did endorse a national home in Palestine for the Jewish people. The U.S. government did form a strategic partnership with Israel in the 1980's. But all this has to be put in context. Palmerston's ideas were stillborn; London quickly regretted the Balfour Declaration; and American support for Israel comes much less from putative imperialists (such as business interests or the military) than from those who feel moral or spiritual ties with the Jewish state.

Conversely, it is also true that Jews play an impressively large role in Western life. The great Zionist leader Chaim Weizmann had access to the highest circles of British officialdom, while AIPAC has rightly been called "perhaps the most

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effective pressure group in Washington." Still, the idea of a Zionist plot rests on the faulty premise that Jews are the only Westerners favoring strong ties to Israel; in fact, of course, this bond draws on many sources—theological, moral, political, and strategic—and enjoys wide support among the Christian majority. Americans have consistently viewed good relations with Israel as an important aspect of U.S. foreign policy. Indeed, while the U.S. public is skeptical about foreign aid in principle, a review of forty years of history shows that most Americans "strongly support" economic and military aid to Israel. Conspiracy theorists tend to ignore these inconvenient details.

Second, myths about the relation between Israel and the United States are not the only myths about Israel rampant in the Muslim world: many in the Middle East are also of two minds about the relation between Israel and the USSR. While Khalid Baqdash, leader of the Syrian Communist party since 1936, holds that "world Jewry is ranged against the Soviet Union," an Egyptian daily maintains that "only the USSR has derived benefit" from the establishment of Israel. These examples, which can be multiplied many times, suggest a state of complete confusion about Israel.

Third, neither the imperialist nor the Zionist interpretation is original to the Middle East; both come from Europe. The notion of Israel as a tool of imperialism goes back to Lenin and the early Bolshevik state. Thus, a Soviet document from July 1919 called Zionism "one of the branches of the imperialist counterrevolution," an idea subsequently repeated *ad nauseam* by the Soviet propaganda apparatus. Leonid Brezhnev, according to Heikal, told the Egyptian ambassador in 1967 that "Israel by itself was nothing. It depended for its existence on American aid, and the reason why the Americans kept Israel alive was because they wanted the oil of the Middle East. . . . The Americans could not themselves attack the Arab nation, but they could attack through Israel."

As for the notion of Israel as part of a Jewish world plot, it derives from Nazi ideology. As early as the mid-1920's, Adolf Hitler wrote in *Mein Kampf* about his suspicions of the Zionists' ultimate goals: "They do not think at all of establishing a Jewish state in Palestine to live in it some day; rather, they want a central organization for their international world cheating, withdrawn from others' reach—a refuge for convicted dregs and a college for aspiring swindlers." And already in the mid-1930's, an Arab writer says, Palestinian Arabs "lapped up fascist and Nazi lies. They saw the Zionists as the sinister world menace of the Nazi legend, and England as a puppet power in their clutches."* Many Arab leaders—including such intellectuals as Michel Aflaq, Shakib Arslan, and Sati' al-Husri, and politicians such as Rashid Ali al-Gilani and Sadat—also adopted this outlook.

In brief, Middle East politicians still today routinely echo the ideas of Lenin and Hitler, the men who initiated this century's most appalling political experiments.

THE two conspiracies share parallel premises. Both dismiss disagreements between Jerusalem and Washington as charades to fool the gullible. Both postulate lock-step agreement between the two sides, and that in turn rules out independent decision-making. Only one of the two parties makes decisions and the other takes orders. One is the ventriloquist, the other the dummy; it may not be clear which is which, but the fundamental relationship is absolutely certain.

At this point the theories converge, the double conspiracy becomes one, and exact roles hardly matter. Americans and Israelis are working together to rule the world, so who cares which of them is dominant, which is subservient? Not being able to discern their real roles only makes the alliance that much more malevolent and sinister. Here is Radio Damascus on the subject: the bond "between Israel and the United States," it pronounced in 1986, "makes Israel a U.S. tool directed against national-liberation movements in the region, and also makes U.S. foreign policy a tool for implementing Israeli policy." Even Sadat, who studied the U.S.-Israeli nexus at first hand, came close to accepting this view. "Israel," he wrote in his memoirs, "had come to assume the role of the only 'power' guarding U.S. interests in the Middle East. This was a role chosen by Israel herself, or even chosen for her by the United States." Taha Yasin Ramadan came up with an even more enigmatic formulation, referring to "Israel's protégés—who created and nurtured it."

The key to this thinking lies in two fantasies: (1) The Jews' economic power permits them to run American foreign policy; and (2) this power is used for imperialist ends. It then follows that (3) the Zionists run U.S. policy and Washington depends heavily on Israel. Or, more succinctly: Jews rule America; Israel serves as part of their mechanism for world control. Of course, this train of thought assumes that both Lenin's and Hitler's ideas are correct—a rare combination in the West but commonplace in the Middle East.

BELIEF in an imperialist plot enhances American influence in the Middle East while fears of a Zionist conspiracy diminish it. Hence, from the point of view of American interests, the imperialist conspiracy is preferable to the Zionist one. But Israel's interest lies in undoing distorted

* Paradoxically, Arab leaders were also spouting the opposite accusation. In 1943, while the gas chambers were operating at full capacity, Faris al-Khuri of Syria asserted that "Zionists are *NAZIS*." This calumny spread with the decades, becoming almost commonplace by 1982.

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perceptions of the U.S.-Israel relationship, for these prevent Muslim enemies from treating it as a normal country. As either pawn or puppeteer, Israel lacks ordinary state interests; whether used by or using the United States, it is connected to something too large to fit the Middle East; whether seen as an outpost of imperialism or as the headquarters of a conspiracy, the Jewish state becomes part of something too threatening to accommodate.

All this recalls the old demonization of Jews in Europe. And just as that demonization caused pogroms and culminated in the Nazi Holocaust, so there is a parallel danger when the Jewish state is made a menace to all humanity. Only when Israel comes to be regarded as a state like any other is there a chance that its neighbors will deal with it in accordance with conventional diplomatic norms.

There is little prospect of this happening soon, however, whatever the outcome of the present conflict. Wild claims about ties between the United States and Israel are not a fringe phenomenon in the Muslim Middle East but—as we have seen—integral to the fabric of its mainstream political life. Still, it is important that American diplomats and politicians take every opportunity to disabuse their Arab counterparts of the idea that U.S.-Israel relations are anything more than they appear to be. Sadat credited his own enlightenment to just such persuasion. "My talks with Dr. Kissinger convinced me," he explained, "that he rejects the simplistic notion of some of your strategists who see—or saw—Israel as the American gendarme in this part of the world." The reiteration of such plain truths may not by itself lead other Middle East leaders to emulate Sadat in making peace with the Jewish state—a prospect which appears distinctly unlikely at this time—but breaking the Arabs' delusions about America and Israel is essential if they are ever to move in that direction.

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The Ideology of Homelessness

Joseph Adelson

EVERY once in a while a deranged man appears across the street from my office, shouting loudly but incoherently about a conspiracy threatening him. After several hours he disappears; presumably someone comes to take him away. But then he reappears in a few weeks, or a few months, and the scene is repeated. I once mentioned him to a colleague, also a psychotherapist, who said I ought to count my blessings since he shows up only so often. My colleague's office is located not too far from a halfway house, and on the streets near his building there are so many strange and disorderly people that some of his patients are fearful and want him to move. He does not blame them, he is sometimes frightened himself. He shakes his head sadly and asks: "How in the world did we ever get into this mess?"

The short, flip answer to his question is that we took a large but manageable problem—caring for the long-term mentally ill—put our Best Minds to work on it, and produced a vast and unmanageable problem, the psychotic homeless. The somewhat longer answer runs along these lines: the traditional mental hospital was disliked by almost everyone. It was costly, it was ineffective, much of the time it served only as a warehouse, and some of the time it was the snakepit so vividly depicted in film, fiction, and exposé journalism. It survived only because there seemed no other option. Then, unexpectedly, an alternative appeared, one produced by apparent progress on two fronts: the emergence of anti-psychotic medication and the development of new ideas about psychosis itself, to the effect that mental illness was rooted in and sustained by malevolent environments, one of which was the mental hospital. By emptying such institutions, not only would the state save untold sums of money, but the patients locked up inside would be liberated, would lead far better lives outside, and might even be cured of what were possibly pseudo-illnesses.

The hospitals were emptied, and disaster followed—it was perhaps the greatest social-policy fiasco of an era which specialized in them. Nothing worked as it was supposed to do. The medications were helpful, but they were not the panaceas advertised. They were not always effective, they sometimes produced serious side effects, many patients refused or could not remember to take them. The substitutes for the hospitals—community centers of various kinds—were not in fact established, or were given over to activities interesting mostly to the mental-health profession, such as providing outpatient psychotherapy for the not-so-disturbed. Then, when one counted the indirect costs of alternate care, or of no care at all, it became evident that there were no financial savings to be had. By the time all these problems were recognized, there were tens of thousands of insane people on the streets, most of them helpless and vulnerable, some dangerous to themselves and others.

The conventional assessment of what went wrong agrees that serious mistakes were made, that we were overly optimistic about what we could accomplish. But as this school of thought sees it, our errors grew out of enthusiasm, out of that activist ardor, characteristically American, which is ever ready to innovate and try out the untried. In this case the experiment failed, but we learned some valuable lessons and will do better next time. Back to the drawing board.

The account seems plausible but is in fact seriously misleading. The decision to empty the mental hospitals was not simply a mistaken judgment. It was an ideological decision deriving from strong convictions about both the nature of psychosis and the function of the hospital. These in turn reflected powerful though often unvoiced assumptions about human nature and the social order. If we had not made those assumptions we would not have made the errors we did. There is, in short, a connection leading from some of the books in my office—books on political philosophy and academic psychology—and that tortured man across the street, wandering up and down the sidewalk and shouting at the heavens.

TO TRACE that connection we could begin from any number of starting points, but a good one might be American academic psychology in the 1950's, then all but dominated by behaviorist learning theory. The

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true psychological scientist, according to the behaviorists, must concentrate on what was visible and external and measurable, and eschew speculating about such ineffables as "the mind." The mind was merely a hypothesis, and even if there were such an entity it could be reached only by the slow, steady building of models based on stimulus and response. All else was wool-gathering.

These ideas, as Gordon Allport of Harvard, a (quiet) opponent of behaviorism, wrote in the mid-1950's, had their origins in the empiricist tradition deriving from John Locke. As Allport characterized that position, since "mind is by nature a *tabula rasa*, it is not the organism but what happens to the organism from outside that is important." And indeed in its earliest, purest version, behaviorism was the heir not only of Locke but of the Enlightenment more generally. In the work of the American psychologist J.B. Watson (1878-1958), behaviorism revived the Enlightenment formula for human perfectibility by rejecting the importance of innate differences and by promoting (in the words of John Passmore) "the conviction that men can be improved to an unlimited degree by controlling the formation of their habits." These were not merely hypothetical possibilities for Watson. One of his major works, *Behaviorism*, was a remarkably self-confident statement of the nearly infinite capacity of behavioral techniques to produce what we want in human conduct.

One might imagine that the Lockean tradition has by now been routed. Who still believes in an organism empty, passive, entirely pliable, lacking in will or purpose and without tendency? Even at the time Allport wrote, about thirty-five years ago, behaviorism was already losing its luster, and was being replaced by the cognitive approaches it once scornfully dismissed. Thus, the dominant voice in developmental psychology in those days was Jean Piaget, who posited complex intrinsic patterns of thinking which unfolded as the child grew. In addition, psychoanalytic psychologies were for the first time becoming respectable in the graduate departments, and that extraordinarily "full" system of internal tendencies was taken very seriously indeed. Even the most formidable contemporary behaviorist, B.F. Skinner, was beginning to seem quaint, his contribution now seen as merely providing a bag of tricks with which behavioral therapists discouraged bad habits.

Yet the Lockean tradition did not wither away. As with other strong ideas—true and false alike—it managed to survive and prosper, doing so by assuming a new identity. Like a revenant, the Lockean spirit departed one host and attached itself to a more receptive one, in this case moving from the learning laboratory to social theories of human conduct, now become aggressively political.

The strategy was to devalue the concept of personality, by denying, first, that it is consistent over time and, second, that it is an important determinant of behavior. Personality was said to be something of a chimera—there is less there than meets the eye. We imagine a degree of consistency we cannot really demonstrate. People will be selfish one moment, altruistic the next. Children who will not cheat in one situation will do so in another—indeed, there are strong findings to this effect, or so it was said. Why should we believe in the existence of traits like honesty or altruism, given how hard it is to nail down their presence?

If such qualities are illusory or ephemeral, and do not govern conduct, then what does? The answer was "the situation," the influence of the immediate milieu, its expectations and constraints: I am "honest" not because of a deeply entrenched character trait, let alone the promptings of the superego, but because I fear the consequences of being caught. If I see others cheating or stealing, and if it is clear I will not be found out, I will not be "honest." *Autres temps, autres moeurs*, even over the short run. People are neither good nor evil, they are reflections of the milieu, and much of the time of their immediate surroundings.

So said, and says, situationism, which I have put here in its purest form, absent the usual qualifications and escape hatches. Like behaviorism, it too is by no means a new idea. It can be traced back to the sociologist W.I. Thomas, in an important essay appearing in the 1920's. Gardner Murphy's influential textbook on personality, published in 1947, gave a full chapter to situationism. But in Murphy's version the situation is only one of a large number of variables influencing conduct, most of which are such factors as traits, needs, defenses, and emotions. In the 1960's and 70's a new and tougher version set itself to expunge those variables, to demonstrate the hegemony of situation *per se*. In the most famous situational experiments, the studies of obedience conducted by Stanley Milgram, an unsuspecting person is persuaded by the "experimenter" to administer ostensibly dangerous electric shocks to ostensible research subjects. In another well-known example, ordinary undergraduates are induced to play the role of prison guards and soon enough lose themselves in beastliness. These demonstrations are quite compelling, seeming to prove that ordinary people can be coerced by "situation" so as to behave in absurd or aberrant or even abhorrent ways.

Yet if one looks at the studies closely, some troubling questions arise. Do they in fact simulate the "reality" they set out to duplicate, and do the "laws" discovered travel beyond the demonstration? Even if they do, they tell us only about short-term events, as though life were composed only of vignettes. What would a longer perspective tell

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us about the human career? Above all, the demonstrations prove compelling only at first blush; once variations are introduced on the original experiments, so many exceptions and ambiguities emerge as to make us wonder whether we have discovered anything that says much or means much.

These logical and empirical problems, serious enough on their own, are overshadowed by an avalanche of findings which contradict the major tenets of situationism (in its strong version). We now know with some certainty that personality is remarkably consistent over time. A personality test taken in one's teens will yield essentially the same results when taken again in one's fifties. Ratings of a person made early in life by others even correlate highly with such ratings in adulthood. The most impressive findings of all are those demonstrating the long-term effects of personality; thus, children rated as undercontrolled in childhood (ages eight to ten) are more likely to be downwardly mobile, or those rated as shy lag behind their peers in such matters as getting married. Even more startling is the evidence from various studies which show a relationship between early mortality and subtle measures of personal style in early adulthood.

The wonder is that situationism was taken seriously in the first place. Anyone who has raised children will attest both to the consistency of character and to its effect on how lives are lived. The reclusive, pensive child will likely remain that way, and will likely lead a different life from that of his gregarious brother. Anyone who has lived long enough will observe the same consistency in his friends. A boy I knew in high school is now an economic analyst who appears frequently on television, and watching him I am transfixed by how little he has changed: the same body language, facial expressions, intonations of voice, above all the same mocking wit, once directed at the fools who taught us, now deployed against the fools who make our economic policy. Of course these are merely anecdotes and not systematic findings, let alone scientific proof. But there has always been enough empirical information to rebut the assumptions of situationism, as in the revealing studies by the Gluecks and by Lee Robins showing close connections between certain forms of childhood disorder and criminality later in life.

SOMETHING, however, was in the air when situationism was introduced—something political—and we get a glimpse of it if we return to Gardner Murphy's treatment of 1947. Well before the civil-rights movement or the onset of feminism, Murphy wanted to show that traits imputed to blacks or Jews or Italians or women are responses to the situations they find themselves in. Psychology, he wrote, demonstrates that "there are no large and socially important differences . . . based on racial stock," and the traits said to characterize a member of a given group—desirable and undesirable alike—are best understood "as reflections of the situation in which he is placed and of the roles which he must enact."

Yet even so, Murphy did not go so far as to assume that circumstance and role were the *sole* answer to behavior; cultural and other differences could be real and perdurable. It was this latter conclusion that was swept away when an egalitarian zeal overtook the social sciences. All differences were now suspect, and many were anathema. Everyone, it was now asserted, is equal: if some score differently on tests, something is wrong with the measure, or how the measure is taken, or it is the result of how we have been raised, or the expectations we have internalized, or the signals given off by those teaching us or testing us. The differences that are undeniably there have been produced by upbringing alone, and are neither biological nor constitutional nor hereditary in origin.

Aaron Wildavsky of Berkeley has termed this state of mind "radical egalitarianism," and in a series of penetrating essays has demonstrated its spread throughout the elite culture. According to its tenets, all differences reflecting "hierarchy" are inherently suspect and reprehensible—men over women, white over black, rich over poor. The new egalitarian passion reaches out, in fact, to *all* relations marked by unequal status—Third World vs. First World, mature vs. young (children's rights), humans against other species (animal rights). Perhaps its most unexpected extension has been to behavior once considered not merely different but socially or morally deviant—homosexuality is the most striking example here, but also drug abuse and to a lesser extent criminality.

We can see how comfortably psychosis fits into the Lockean formula and its egalitarian extension. The notion that personality is insubstantial, transient, illusory, had its counterpart in a new understanding of psychosis—that it too is not a fixed condition but is fluid and changes with the moment; indeed, that it might not be present at all, but only an illusion. In this understanding, "craziness" is a term we use to shut away people who are merely different, independent, or eccentric. They listen to a different drummer. What we term insanity is often no more than a heightened sensitivity to the craziness of the world, or to the truly mad behavior of the so-called normals. Some psychotics are visionaries, seeing truths the rest of us can reach only through mind-altering drugs. And since psychosis is not biological, not fixed, and not intractable, it should not be "treated" unless the person affected so wishes.

The attack on the idea of psychosis might have remained largely academic—that is, without practical effect—were it not coupled with an equally vigorous attack on the mental hospital. The un-

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derlying purpose of the hospital, it was now said, is to imprison those we find deviant, hence offensive. It is an instrument of social control, a way the state has developed to remove certain types of troublemakers, especially those who are not clearly "criminal," but merely burdensome or troubling. In any case, the hospital cannot cure its occupants, since they do not suffer from disease. To the contrary, the hospital intensifies the condition by confirming the label of "crazy" which the community has already affixed. In this way the hospital helps to create the very condition it is supposed to treat: the hospital "situation" induces "insanity" much as Milgram's experiments produced "cruelty."

THE problem, in short, is not in the person but in the milieu: over the years, this view was set forth by several writers, most brilliantly by the sociologist Erving Goffman, whose métier was a crystalline depiction of environments. He surpassed himself in the book *Asylums*, written from the inside (as a pretended staff member) and capturing the claustral surrealism of the mental hospital. But however compelling it was, *Asylum* was still reportage. What was needed was something "empirical," hence scientifically respectable. Some years later that and more was to be provided when the prestigious journal *Science* published an article by Stanford's David Rosenhan that was to have a profound effect on both the idea of psychosis and our view of the hospital.

Rosenhan inserted normal people into mental hospitals to see if they would be detected. The pseudo-patients were instructed to report schizophrenic symptoms in order to gain admission but to behave normally thereafter. They were not found out. The staff regarded them as genuine psychotics. The demonstration was taken as proof that sane and insane are not sharply demarcated categories, and inferentially that the hospitals are filled with mildly disturbed or even normal people who are locked up for no good reason. Rosenhan's article was a smashing success, becoming the most widely cited and reprinted article in psychology, the crowning empirical achievement of the movement against psychiatry.

In the fullness of time we are able to see that the Rosenhan demonstration is itself illusory. It demonstrates only that hospitals, like other bureaucratic institutions, tend to take the given for granted and to follow routine. It also shows, what did not need to be shown, that it is easy to carry out an imposture, especially when there is no reason to suspect one. The Rosenhan study now seems badly outdated, and the same may be said for anti-psychiatry as a whole, which lingers on only among the hopelessly ideologized. The question to ask, as with situationism, is why it was believed in the first place. For it too violates ordinary experience.

To be sure, not all psychotics are psychotic all of the time. There are ups and downs, there are long periods of remission, there are many cases where insanity is a once-in-a-lifetime event. But that does not disprove the fact that psychosis exists or that those suffering from it are unable to care for themselves. The first such person I ever saw was a fifteen-year-old boy who carried on a combative conversation with an invisible person located behind me. The most recent was a hospitalized woman who believed that her six-year-old daughter was in league with the devil, and must be put to death. These are by no means unusual examples. How can we imagine them to be nothing more than eccentricities or modest variations of normality? How can we expect such persons to assume full responsibility for themselves? And how in the world could we ignore so blithely powerful evidence—not nearly as overwhelming as it later became, but of sufficient weight to have given us pause—that biological factors play a significant role in the genesis of psychosis? Why did anti-psychiatry mesmerize, and for so long a time?

MANY of the answers can be found in a dazzling new book on mental illness, *Madness in the Streets*, by Rael Jean Isaac and Virginia Armat.* One of several full-scale treatments of the problem to appear in the last few years, it is to my mind the best, an intellectual as well as a social and political history. Isaac and Armat spell out the ways in which the doctrines of anti-psychiatry weakened our sense of obligation to a group, many of whom are genuinely helpless, by claiming that they were not psychotic at all but only the victims of poverty and racism, or prisoners of a callous government. The complex realities of diagnosis, cure, and treatment were thereby reduced to the level of Ken Kesey's famous novel *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, with its melodramatic portrait of innocents wrongly accused, helpless in the hands of cruel pseudo-healers.

Isaac and Armat's presentation is not either/or; it recognizes at every moment that methods of diagnosis and treatment have themselves been abused or used recklessly and that they do not always provide cures, let alone miraculous ones. But the politicizing of mental illness, in the belief that it is one more example of the powerful oppressing the weak, has led to a bizarre state of affairs where those who would certainly be helped, and might indeed be cured, are kept from appropriate therapies. Anyone still believing that, in the disciplines of psychiatry and psychology, science easily overcomes dogma should read the section of this book entitled "The War Against Treatment," in which the authors show how weak, irrelevant, or nonexistent findings were all al-

* The Free Press, 450 pp., $24.95.

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lowed to trash good research in forums responsible for making public policy.

Reading these accounts one is reminded again of the remarkable power of the judiciary in setting policy, often to disastrous effect. The "right to refuse treatment," noble as it may sound in principle, has had nothing but wretched consequences for psychotics, for their families, and for the community at large. A practitioner in the field hears about such cases constantly—the "Billie Boggs" case in New York is merely the most notorious—in which a person clearly out of control but refusing care is bounced from the police to the emergency room to the hospital to the family and ultimately to the streets. One might excuse the judges, on the grounds that they know not what they do. It is hard to be quite so forgiving of my own profession, which helped establish these policies and continues to aid and abet them even after their bankruptcy has become fully evident.

Isaac and Armat discuss an important California case, involving the right to refuse medication, in which *amicus* briefs were filed by both the American Orthopsychiatric and American Psychological Associations, the former using "wildly exaggerated figures, not backed up by research," the latter offering arguments that Isaac and Armat correctly term "extraordinary," among them the idea that delusion and hallucination are rights protected by the First Amendment. On the question of whether medication may be helpful in calming violently agitated patients, the brief recommends instead such techniques as seclusion, strait-jackets, and cold wet-packs—in short, all of the methods used in the snakepit asylum which led to the attack on the mental hospital in the first place.

ANTI-PSYCHIATRY will sooner or later vanish, its demise aided by this devastating book. But the longer, deeper tradition that produced and sustains it simply carries on, telling us that nothing of real importance can be found within the skin, that it is all out there. The last national convention of the American Psychological Association presented a two-day mini-convention on homelessness which paraded all the standard errors. Speaker after speaker—psychologists and psychiatrists all—argued against too much attention being given to the psychological. One of them inveighed against funding research into substance use and mental illness as contributors to the plight of the homeless. What then is responsible? Why, our old friends poverty and racism. And what is to be done? Why, call in some other old friends, "empowerment" and "action research" and "innovative interventions," along with such new ones as "ecological resource perspectives."

Empty organism, empty diagnosis, empty solutions. And in the meantime, that deranged man across the street from my office goes on shaking the heavens—and everyone around him—with his tormented cries.

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A Monument to Messianism

Ruth R. Wisse

THIS happened exactly twenty years ago, during Passover 1925. I had just come to Warsaw for the first time in my life . . . before I had any connections with the Yiddish press or Yiddish literature. My visit happened to coincide with the unveiling of Peretz's tombstone on the tenth anniversary of his death. Soon after my arrival we went out into the street to join the procession to his grave. The whole neighborhood was flooded with Jews, and we were swept up in the tide of a huge demonstration. Later, when I lived in Warsaw, I was to see many mass demonstrations of Jewish workers and student youth on May Day and other such occasions—but that first one astounded and moved me.

The many official delegations and representatives disappeared into the crowd, swallowed up by the mass of ordinary Jews wearing caps, hats, and fedoras, young people and old, merchants and workers, a human forest on the move. It looked to me like a slice of Asia—in Lemberg where I lived I had never seen anything like it. All the surrounding streets were black with people waiting to join the massive train. People had already occupied the choice places at the cemetery, and those who now tried to run ahead to secure places among the tombstones were bitterly disappointed. Since early morning the stones and trees around the writers' section had been heavily draped with Jews, and now in the crush of new arrivals some of the gravestones were overturned.

Sholem Asch was to deliver the main address. Somehow a path was cleared for him. He made his way up a small incline, and for a few seconds I caught sight of a tall figure with a large face and a flash of brown that was either his suit or the cloak of the woman everyone was pointing to, whispering respectfully, "That's Mrs. Asch, Mathilda Asch." Any hopes of catching something of Asch's speech were in vain. The buzz of the crowd rose like the rushing waters of a flood to drown out his voice.

That was Jewish Warsaw expressing its attachment to one of its true spiritual leaders. The number of Jews who crowded into the Gensia Street cemetery that day are not to be found today in all of Poland, and I'm including in this sum all the returning Jewish refugees from Russia.

This account of the unveiling of the tombstone of I.L. Peretz appeared in the first issue of the Yiddish weekly *Dos naye lebn* ("New Life") in Lodz, April 10, 1945. The writer was Rokhl Auerbach, quite a well-known figure in Jewish cultural circles before the war, who had survived as a Gentile on the Aryan side of the ghetto wall thanks to her command of Polish and the depth of her Polish acculturation.

Twenty years earlier, coming as a stranger to Warsaw that spring day in 1925, Rokhl Auerbach could not have known how much controversy had surrounded the gravestone project in the decade since Peretz's death on April 3, 1915. Peretz had been the most commanding personality in the rise of modern Jewish literature. Routinely linked with Mendele Mocher Sforim (Sholem Jacob Abramovitch) and Sholem Aleichem (Sholem Rabinovitch) in the triumvirate of modern Yiddish prose masters, Peretz had assumed the additional role of literary guide and mentor to a younger generation of Yiddish and Hebrew writers. These he published in the series of little magazines he edited, and he tried to inspire them with the vision of a major Jewish literature which, in adapting traditional sources to contemporary urgencies, might hold its own with any other in Europe. He himself wrote essays, poems, dramas, and many varieties of short story, feuilleton, and sketch. While his restless nature may have prevented him from perfecting the large-scale projects to which he aspired, it kept him alive to experiments and fresh ideas. Peretz was both the pioneer of a new secular European Jewish culture and the authority who initiated others into its ranks.

Peretz had died during the first year of World War I, when Jewish Warsaw (337,000, constituting 38.1 percent of the total city population) was strained to the limit trying to provide relief for the thousands of refugees flooding into the city from villages and towns overrun by the invading and defending armies. Characteristically, he had stood at the center of this relief work, supervising the expansion of soup kitchens, orphanages, and

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schooling facilities for children. His sudden fatal heart attack at age sixty-four was attributed to the stress of those last frantic months.

Jews felt themselves orphaned by the death of this writer who had tried to guide their dignified transition from a traditional religious folk into a modern people. There was an enormous outpouring of grief everywhere in the Jewish world, and especially in Warsaw. Peretz's was said to have been the largest Jewish funeral ever seen in the city. Nevertheless, it took ten years before a gravestone was erected in his honor, a period far too long to explain by reference to the war.

Indeed, when the semicircular marble tomb was finally unveiled in 1925, it marked the grave not only of Peretz but also of his fellow writers Jacob Dineson and Sh. Ansky. One cannot say that Peretz was disgraced by the proximity of these two dear friends on either side of him. Dineson, who for the better part of his life subordinated his own literary ambitions to the man he considered preeminent, had asked and received from the widow, Helena, permission to be buried beside Peretz in her stead; Ansky, author of *The Dybbuk*, was Peretz's very talented, devoted colleague. Still, it was surely odd to find the most famous Jewish writer in Poland without a tomb of his own. Many people were offended at the implicit insult.

Part of the blame was directed at the Warsaw Jewish Community Council which had donated too small a plot for so great a personage. Peretz had been an employee of the Council since January 1, 1891, that is, since shortly after he took up residence in Warsaw. By all accounts, he was an exemplary public servant, doing his administrative work in the early part of the day so that he could have his afternoons and evenings free for writing. This separation of occupation from vocation carried over into the content of his work. As an unqualified opponent of assimilation, Peretz was critical of some of the Jewish community leaders for their embrace of Polish culture at the expense of their own, and as a qualified supporter of socialism, he thought they did not do enough to narrow the gap between themselves and the desperately poor. In return, the prominent Jews of the Council may have harbored less than generous feelings toward their most famous employee. While it is not true, as was often claimed, that they boycotted his funeral, it may well be true that they skimped in their allotment of space and resources for his monument.

But the argument over the tombstone extended well beyond the Jewish Community Council. Peretz's funeral in 1915 was probably the last moment when one could speak of Polish Jewry as a people with at least minimal cultural and political cohesion. Published reports of the funeral lingered on the by-then extraordinary fact that each of the splintering political, religious, social, and cultural groupings was officially represented in the procession—Hebraists and Yiddishists, observant Jews and all manner of secularists, Zionists and socialists and Territorialists in all their tangled branches, conservative community leadership and radical workers' opposition. Indeed, some younger intellectuals actually credited Peretz with having *created* a unified Jewish people out of the warring Jewish factions of the 19th century. According to this view, Peretz was a spiritual Garibaldi. His vision of the Jews as a united people had shaped such a people in fact; he was a modern hasidic *rebbe* who had actually performed the earthly miracle of drawing together the scattered sparks into a new universal soul.

Unfortunately, by the time of his death, the same features that made Peretz's work so universally appealing also prompted each sector of the modern Jewish community to claim him exclusively for its own, thereby prolonging for a decade the quarrel over the proposed monument. We are told that the conflict grew so bitter it could not be resolved through compromise. The eventual triumph of Yiddishists over Hebraists is confirmed in the nature of the monument that was finally erected, but because the tomb also covers two other Yiddish writers, it became less a shrine to Peretz in all his complexity than to a certain cultural vision. Given the intensity of the debate over the monument, it is interesting to ask what that vision was.

The inscription on Peretz's tomb is taken from his drama *Di goldene keyt* ("The Golden Chain"), first written in 1907 and first performed in Philadelphia and New York in 1920. The phrase "the golden chain" refers to the perpetuation of Jewish spiritual aristocracy through the ages, and Peretz dramatized this theme through the portrayal of four successive generations of a hasidic dynasty. Hasidism was the movement that finally brought kabbalistic ideas into the mainstream of Jewish life, domesticating the messianic ideal, and shifting the emphasis of Jewish values from outward behavior to inner faith. Peretz found in this hasidic striving for redemption a powerful metaphor for his own spiritual hunger.

The most striking feature of Peretz's drama—and the reason it is so hard to stage successfully—is the degree to which Act 1 overshadows the rest. The scene opens at the end of Sabbath in the main room of Reb Shloyme's house. Shloyme, described by Peretz as "a very tall, gray, pale Jew . . . with an extraordinarily high forehead, extraordinarily large expressive eyes, and a childlike smile on his shrunken, pain-etched face," has been expected to perform the ritual ceremony of *Havdalah* that brings the Sabbath to a close and marks the separation of its holiness from the profane work week. Reb Shloyme's household and the followers who have spent the Sabbath in his company, eager

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to get back to their everyday affairs, are restless and increasingly uneasy at his delay. The room buzzes with anxiety as word gets around that the delay is not accidental.

Shloyme has decided not to perform the *Havdalah* ritual. He can no longer abide the degradation of the Jewish condition, the procession of puny, hunched little Jews who come to him day after day looking for crumbs of comfort. There, according to legend, sits the messiah at the gates of Rome, waiting in perpetuity as the deeds of Jews are measured off on the scales of good and evil, a speck on one side, a speck on the other. But so insignificant are these cumulative deeds, on account of the humiliating condition of the Jews everywhere in exile, that they will never suffice to bring about the redemption.

Reb Shloyme is modeled on one of the most controversial figures in the history of Hasidism, Rabbi Menahem Mendl of Kotsk, whose mysterious self-isolation toward the end of his life is here interpreted by Peretz as the final snap of patience in waiting for the messiah. By keeping the Sabbath on earth, the rabbi means to break the cycle of nature and force God at last to usher in the messianic age. Then, instead of the rabble of little men with frozen souls over whom he habitually presides, he will lead a great congregation to the seat of God:

Singing and dancing we go to greet Him.
We, Jews of grandeur and glory,
Jews of Sabbath rejoicing,
Our souls aflame!
The clouds sever at our coming!
Heavens throw open their gates!
Into the Divine Cloud we swim
To the Throne of Glory!
On the stone of unblemished marble we stand!
Not beggars,
Not petitioners,
But proud and glorious Jews,
Who say to Him:
We could wait no longer!
Chanting the Song of Songs,
Singing and dancing we come.

It was this triumphal vision of a messianic Jewry that was selected from among all of Peretz's writings to be carved into the marble of his tomb. Modern critical theory may warn us against the identification of character with author, but no such consideration inhibited Peretz's contemporaries. They ascribed Reb Shloyme's words to Peretz himself; nothing in the inscription on the tombstone suggests the context of the play from which it is taken. In the face of their own pauperism, and in the face of the anti-Semitism of the newly sovereign Polish state, those who prevailed in the argument over the tombstone heard Peretz exhorting them to grandeur and beauty, and it was to this vision of themselves that they erected his monument.

And indeed, some association between Peretz the Yiddish writer and Reb Shloyme the hasidic visionary seems irresistible. Along with almost all the Jewish writers and intellectuals of his time, Peretz had started out as an *opponent* of Hasidism and hasidic rabbis: he distrusted the religious power these dynastic figures wielded over their credulous followers, their resistance to modern education, their separation from the surrounding society through antiquated costume and customs. In an earlier Hebrew play, Peretz's central figure is a hasidic rebbe who imprisons his daughter in order to keep her from running off with a pharmacist. Like the voice of the European Enlightenment, which could not be stilled no matter how hard the Hasidim tried, the daughter continues to cry out from the cellar where she has been imprisoned, eventually shaking her father's confidence and faith.

But by the turn of the century—in fact, by the time he wrote this short play—Peretz's attitude toward the hasidic ideal had become much more complicated and ambivalent. Although in his view Hasidism still exerted an unhealthy influence in Poland, attacking it was almost as supererogatory as the movement itself was out of date. Politically, Jews were under mounting pressure from both the czarist government and Polish nationalists who wanted to gain their independence from the czar; this hostility, directed alike at enlightened and traditional Jews, was far more reactionary and dangerous than the weakening bastions of Jewish faith. Intellectually and artistically, Peretz began to fear the reductive influence of ideological rationalism every bit as much as he feared the obscurantism of religion.

"Light" and "darkness" were the catchwords both of the hasidic movement and of its modern opponents, and Peretz's changing relation to both can be traced through his use of the two terms. In the earlier Hebrew play of 1902, the daughter goes half-mad when she is cut off from the light of modern knowledge and imprisoned in the dark cellar of the hasidic household. In *The Golden Chain*, whose very title glitters, a daughter who runs off with a doctor gives birth to a blind child and brings the baby home to her father because only he can restore its sight.

Peretz was in the position of the daughter. Having run off with modern science in the hope that it would liberate him from the oppressive features of Jewish life, he found that the next generation (including his own son) wanted to rid itself of Jewish life altogether. Enlightenment had blinded these Jews to the beauties of their own civilization. To restore their sight he would have to bring them back to the sources, in the hope that they could still be inspired by the residual glory of the faith they had lost.

Peretz's own inspiration came increasingly from

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folklore and folk tales—that is, from the imagination of credulous Jews who had not yet been embarrassed by their beliefs. So he reached back to the origins of the hasidic movement and to the messianic yearnings that fueled it to shape the Promethean figure of Reb Shloyme. Oppressed and impatient, like Reb Shloyme, with the never-ending stream of Jews who petitioned him daily where he worked (not metaphorically, but really and truly, as head of the cemetery division of the Warsaw Jewish Community Council), Peretz expressed his frustration with the pygmy life in which he felt trapped by summoning, through the character of Reb Shloyme, a race of giants. More precisely, he called for a race of spiritual giants, avatars of a new Jewish messianism in the form of secular Yiddish culture.

Among Jews in the United States who were making practical gains on the new continent, and among the colonists in Palestine who were establishing the foundations of the Jewish homeland, and among the Jewish Communists in the Soviet Union who were adapting Yiddish culture to the requirements of Marxist dogma, Peretz's call was hardly very popular. But in the newly independent Poland, Peretz became the figurehead of a "new Jewish faith" that would, it was felt, counteract all the forces of decline. The remarkable appeal of this faith—secular, but close to religious sources—can be discerned in these words of the Polish-Yiddish poet Israel Shtern, published in 1926:

> Peretz, the most restless, the liveliest, stormiest, the most sanguine, most revolutionary of all our writers, turns out to be the most religious writer in our literature. Because at the broadest root, religion is revolutionary. Authentic fear of God is tempestuous, radical, breaking even ritual commandments that stand in the way of absolute religious faith. Sacrifice is a commandment of the Torah; one entire book of the Pentateuch is devoted to its laws. Yet Isaiah, who wanted to cauterize the sin at the heart of his people as artlessly as the angel had once seared his lips with the burning coal, was disgusted by the metaphoric, small-scale, mediated purification through animal-slaughter. Similarly, the miracle-rabbi Reb Shloyme [in *The Golden Chain*] knows very well that it is written: "Six days shalt thou labor . . . and the seventh day thou shalt rest." But the six days have grown too earthly. The six days have become abnormal as a result of too much normalcy, bustle, too much dust-encrusted materialism. In their desire to be natural during the six days, to improve and cultivate nature, people wheel too much, deal too much, sow, reap, and plant too much and become unnatural in the process. The six days turn crippled, like six fingers of a hand.
>
> Reb Shloyme rebels against it. He is chastity, perfection, straightforwardness, the red-hot iron that through some miracle never dulls, and never cools, that wants the world in its truthfulness, in its purity, in its original integrity. He wants human bosoms to incline like pitchers and to draw from the fresh stream of nature's original fountain. . . . Revolutionary Man shatters both the rusted and the luminous chains that stifle his breath and prevent him from filling his chest with the breath of farthest freedom. Revolutionary Man cannot and will not take comfort in waiting for the gradual unfolding of events. He cannot comfort himself with peaceful hopes because the groans and sorrows of the unconsolable surround him on all sides; the need is great and salvation is urgent.

IN THIS astonishing tribute, which pours out in the same fervent vein for 28 pages, Peretz's qualified use of religious symbolism is assumed as the basis of a whole new form of Jewishness, indirectly or directly associated by Shtern (and many of his contemporaries) with the revolution—the Communist revolution—that had already taken place on the other side of the Polish border. Shtern, who was much hungrier than Peretz, in a much, much hungrier time, believed that in drinking in the messianism of Reb Shloyme he had refreshed himself at the most perfect wellspring of contemporary faith.

Sholem Asch, who was (as Rokhl Auerbach noted) the main speaker at the unveiling of Peretz's monument, offered in his novels the purest example of this same motif of faith. Asch was typical of others of his generation in extracting from the code of Jewish law and behavior what he presumed to be its essence, but whereas most of his contemporaries focused on the ethical core, the part that could exist without the ritual commandments, the element Asch exalted was that spiritual force which helped the Jew resist and transcend his economic constraints and political humiliations. It may have been the search for a romantic hero that attracted Asch to the single form of romantic grandeur of which Jews were capable: martyrdom, dying for the sanctification of the Name of God. Or perhaps his desire for universal brotherhood, specifically the brotherhood of Jews and Poles, guided him to the theme of faith as something he felt the two peoples had in common. In any case, Asch followed the lead of his teacher Peretz in dusting off the purple of the Jewish past, but he went much farther in unleashing messianic longing.

Many commentators have recognized in Peretz's neo-Hasidism, and in the figure of Reb Shloyme, the influence of romanticism or of neo-romanticism or of Nietzsche. But there is a difference between the messianic idealism of Reb Shloyme and the quests of analogous European heroes who stormed the heavens of their own countries. For a century the great romantic hero, the model of political rebellion against tyranny, had been the figure of Prometheus, "the savior and the strength of suffering man" as Shelley hailed him in "Prometheus Unbound" (1818-19):

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To suffer woes which Hope thinks infinite;
To forgive wrongs darker than death or night;
To defy Power, which seems omnipotent;
To love, and bear; to hope, till Hope creates
From its own wreck the thing it contemplates;
Neither to change, nor falter, nor repent;
This, like thy glory, Titan, is to be
Good, great and joyous, beautiful and free;
This is alone Life, Joy, Empire, and Victory.

However unearthly Shelley's language, however searing his poetic fire, the ambition of his hero remains sturdily human; he is shooting for a kingdom on earth. By contrast, unleashing the Jewish Prometheus was a far more problematic enterprise, because where there is only One God, there can be only one rebellion, and that the ultimate.

A true messianic liberation of the Jews can come only at the *expense* of "Life, Joy, Empire, and Victory," at the expense of the world in all its temporal aspects. Jewish messianism implies a wholly New World, which is why the rabbinic tradition considers it so dangerous, and why Hasidism (according to Gershom Scholem's interpretation) had to sacrifice most of its messianic impulse in order to become a mass movement. Peretz was fully aware of the dangers of unleashed messianism even in a secular context, and despite the passion of the outburst he puts into the mouth of Reb Shloyme, he does not offer a sanguine view of the rabbi's influence.

The isolated passage from Reb Shloyme's soliloquy that was incribed on the Peretz tombstone acquires, in fact, a very different meaning when it is read within the context of the play. Immediately following this visionary outburst, which occurs in Act 1, the everyday Jews prevail on the rabbi's son Pinkhas to recite *Havdalah* in his stead, so that life as they know it may continue on its course. Once he usurps his father's role, Pinkhas becomes the new *rebbe*, ushering in a cycle of decline that continues through his own son and grandson. By the end of the play, the generations have become so weakened that one cannot be certain the chain of Jewish tradition will continue for much longer. Thus Reb Shloyme's defiance of history, powerful as it is, leaves in its aftermath a much darker, drearier Judaism than existed before it.

Reb Shloyme appears in Peretz's work along with other majestic Jews of faith as part of a dialectical tension between conflicting creative designs. Rather than hold the Jews up to ridicule by the standards of a civilization that was proving itself ever so much uglier than theirs, Peretz sought indigenous models of striving, nobility, pride, confidence, authority, and individual will. Reb Shloyme's solitary defiance is a reminder that Hasidism began as a revolt of individuals, that the movement associated in later generations with docile conservatives was actually the most radical admission of personality that Judaism had ever allowed. In creating the figure of Shloyme, Peretz was trying to counteract the bleak prospect that faced his people, pitting extreme against extreme—the extreme need of the Jew for an alternative world against the extreme need of the Gentile for a world without Jews. If Shloyme overpowers the play, it is because the author shared much of his desperation. But Reb Shloyme's heroic stature is ultimately part of Peretz's *tragic* assessment of the messianic impulse in Hasidism, which exacted far too high a price for the hope it announced.

Di goldene keyt, the golden chain of transmission, was Peretz's true subject in the play, and it is thus artistically appropriate (though, as I said, dramatically troublesome) that Shloyme's overreaching action should leave a reduced Judaism in its wake. When Maurice Schwartz's company performed the play at the Yiddish Art Theater in New York in 1920, Abraham Cahan, the astute editor of the *Jewish Daily Forward*, wrote that Act 1, if presented as a separate and independent piece, would have had much more artistic power and "would have been better able to transform the impossible into the possible." But Peretz had not meant to transform the impossible into the possible. He had always coupled hope with fear, hope for a better future with fear of a future that could turn still worse. It was his ardent followers who extracted the messianism without the warning, the hope without the fear.

No case of "creative misreading" ever had direr consequences than this, for to the degree that they cut faith loose from the equivocal framework in which it had been placed, those who fashioned Peretz's monument closed their eyes to the very dangers he had dramatized. Genuine Hasidim place their trust in God because they consider Him the source of history, the Almighty, the Lord of Hosts. It is not that they fail to appreciate power: they ascribe to God the power they lack, and trust in Him to use it in His divine wisdom. By contrast, Jews who do not believe in God's intervention in history must place their trust elsewhere: in Mankind, or the Proletariat, or Universal Humanity. This is the throne toward which they go, dancing and singing, a throne not of heaven but of earth. As we know, the messianic hope expressed on Peretz's monument was linked by some of his followers to the Communist revolution; and as we also know, that naive and horribly misplaced hope for a transformation of humans into higher, better beings was soon countered externally by a stronger determination, which Polish Jewry could never have anticipated, to transform Jews into ashes. False messianism has always been the particular temptation and particular failing of the Jewish people, especially in times of acutest pressure. The monument to Peretz

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stands in the terrifying and most tragic tradition of Jewish error.

THIS is not, of course, how the monument is or is likely to be seen. The tombstone, still visible today, has been hailed as an emblem of remarkable, indeed miraculous, endurance. "It is actually a marvel of Jewish survival," writes Yitzkhak Turkow-Grudberg, survivor of a famous theater-family, in a 1965 study of Peretz's role in the Yiddish theater:

> It is a kind of miracle that during the destruction of Jewish Poland and Jewish Warsaw, when Jewish tombstones were used for paving the streets, and cemeteries were used for sports fields, that the monument of the sculptor Ostczega, the marble tomb of Peretz, should have remained erect, proud and untouched above the holy graves, untouched by the destroyer and untouched by fate.
>
> Very close by, alongside the tombstone of Esther-Rokhl Kaminska, is the gravestone of my mother. Her marbled inscription is shot through by a bullet. Many of the other stones have been pierced by bullets or completely shattered. But Peretz's tomb is as intact as the figure and the name of Peretz in the creative life of the Jewish people.

For Turkow-Grudberg, and Rokhl Auerbach, and those who either survived or came after the destruction of Polish Jewry, the monument is the very proof of Jewish survival against all odds. Those who stand before Peretz's monument, like those who erected it, are ever tempted to forget the bleak cautionary context of *The Golden Chain* and give themselves over to the thrill of its spiritual call. We have heard it above in English translation; here it is in the original Yiddish:

un azoy geyen mir!
zingendik un tantsndik.
mir groyse, groyse yidn,
shabes-yontevdike yidn,
di neshomes flakern!
far undz volkn—shpaltn zikh!
himlen—praln d'tovern oyf!
in onen hakoved shvimen mir arayn.
tsum kisey hakoved tsu. . . .
un mir betn nisht
un mir betlen nisht,
groyse, shtoltse yidn zenen mir
mir zogn im:
lenger vartn nisht gekont!
shir hashirim zingen mir,
zingendik, tantsndik geyen mir.

It is hard to resist the hopeful strain of a monument invested with so much living faith. If, in their desperation, some of the Jews of Poland in the mid-1920's wanted to derive from Peretz's words a surge of pride and a hope of glory, how much keener the need of Jews who stand before the monument today to try to shore up, against the utter ruin of European Jewish civilization, some posthumous symbols of "survival," of whatever remains "erect" and "intact." We want to recall the cemetery on Gensia Street (now renamed for the hero of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising, Anielewicza Mordechaja) through the prism of Rokhl Auerbach's recollection, flooded by tens of thousands of Jews who comprised one of the most complex and culturally sophisticated populations in Jewish history, probably in the history of the world. The monument *did* survive the attempt of so much of Europe to destroy all traces of the Jews, and it survived the secular spiritualism that so many Jews believed would take them to a better world. But one thing is certain: the Jewish people cannot afford another such monument.

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Ronald Reagan & the Culture War

Midge Decter

THERE are now four living ex-Presidents of the United States, and four ex-Presidents' wives. Never before in the country's history have there been so many—as recently as the time of Richard Nixon's presidency there were none—and in truth we do not know what to make of or to do with them. There is no formal political provision for an American President out of office, and there are no formal social demands made upon him, either.

Only the publishing industry, it seems, knows how it wishes to deal with the problem, which is to turn each departing President, and First Lady, into a one-time hot commodity with a ghost-written celebrity book. (By one of those happy ironies that are responsible for bringing the book-publishing industry so much unmerited success, the one presidential memoir that was not heatedly courted, Richard Nixon's, will very likely turn out to have been the most profitable.) Thus, in less than two short years since the inauguration of George Bush, Simon & Schuster has provided us with a mammoth volume entitled *An American Life** purporting to be the autobiography of Ronald Reagan.

As could have been predicted by the tradition from which it springs and the length of time it took to produce, *An American Life* is a book that bounces along, breathless and wide-eyed. After the fashion of all synthetically manufactured success stories, it pretends to tell all and tells almost nothing, and focuses exclusively on its ostensibly unassuming hero with little reflection on either the world around him or the real experiences vouchsafed him there. The one way in which *An American Life* differs significantly from most other celebrity memoirs, however, is that its author (who seems to be Robert Lindsey) has managed to find an actual conversational voice, and that voice is unmistakably the voice of Ronald Reagan as we came to know him. The book's tone is the audible, or if you will, readable, representation of that most vivid figure who, through eight years of being confronted each day with extremes of hostility and adulation, remained completely at ease within his own skin, detached, and unfailingly warm and genial as only the very detached can be.

Another way *An American Life* differs from its counterparts is that the majority of concocted autobiographical best-sellers—Lee Iacocca's comes most immediately to mind—tend to do a great deal of heavy breathing over the most mundane events and circumstances, whereas the Reagan book unfolds its long record of genuinely charged and important happenings with an almost maddening cheer. Whether the account is of Reagan as a young boy finding his father lying outside the family home in a drunken stupor, or of Reagan as an elderly man first walking into the White House as President of the United States, or even of Reagan as President being shot in the chest by a crazed young would-be assassin—not to mention a host of lesser but surely stirring experiences in the course of a singular career—there is almost no trace in these pages of what had to have been a far more than ordinary measure of fear, passion, ambition, anger, and wonderment. The only passages that seem to move the book an inch off its tidy composure are those involving Reagan's meetings with Mikhail Gorbachev and especially the amusement—that is the word—afforded the two of them by the discomfiture of their respective advisers when they went off alone to talk.

It seems important to know about Ronald Reagan that, with the possible exception of Abraham Lincoln, he may have been our most amusable President. It also seems important that he is a man who, making entries in what we are told is his own private diary, writes the words "h--l" and "d--m" [*sic*]—this, from someone who spent an important part of his adult life living and working in Hollywood. It will, one day, take a truly gifted writer, perhaps a novelist, to solve for us the puzzle of such a man.

Meanwhile, the main thing his own book achieves is to whet retrospective curiosity about the character of the Reagan administration and about how that character was related to the person of this extraordinary and extraordinarily mysterious figure.

ONE of the paradoxes of American politics, something little understood by people in other countries, is that any person elected to the presidency of the United States must be driven by a boundless ambition and must at the same time be willing to become almost wholly the creature of others. In some instances, these others are pursuing principles, in some, they are merely venal, and in some, they are downright larcenous.

Whatever the case, a newly elected President ordinarily enters the Oval Office after a years-long, grueling course of individual sacrifice and discipline and yet carrying on his back an army of creditors, political, moral, emotional, financial. Each day with respect to a daunt-

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ingly wide array of matters he is enjoined to be a "leader" by people whose definition of "leadership" is that he surrender himself to their particular plans for him. Only someone with no principles or desires of his own could emerge from such a predicament unsullied and yet without having made a large number of his friends and supporters bitterly resentful. In other words, presidential politics are, even under the best of circumstances, hardly edifying.

Now in this respect, among all postwar presidencies, including even that of Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan's seemed, certainly at first, to be untypical. To be sure, Reagan was by no means new to electoral politics, even presidential politics. As governor of California and a far from weak challenger to Gerald Ford's nomination in 1976, he had more than amply demonstrated his ordinary political bona fides. Though one finds not a breath of it in his book, the son of the town drunk of Dixon, Illinois, could hardly have become a successful screen actor, and from there governor of perhaps the most important state in the Union, without enormous drive, merely by a series of happy accidents.

And to be sure again, by 1980 Reagan had collected to himself a host of friends and supporters whose instrument he had agreed to be, from an assortment of wealthy businessmen to the hard core of a burgeoning conservative movement to a small but vociferous band of disaffected liberals who turned out to be speaking for a veritable army of defecting Democrats. He had to have been as desperately focused on the White House for as long a time as any other successful candidate, and he had to have entered the White House with at least as many payoffs, spiritual as well as material, to make. Indeed, with more of them than usual, because the true conservatives, who had been wandering in the desert for longer than the biblical forty years, descended on Washington thirsting unslakably for revolution; and the militant ex-liberals, whose constituents had turned a winnable election into a landslide, followed not far behind with a thirst of their own. Only the businessmen, perhaps, and not all of them, were holding conventional chits.

Yet in spite of all this, somehow neither the people who were for him nor those who were against him could ever quite bring themselves to credit the idea that Ronald Reagan was after all a politician among politicians and, like the rest, a man heavily in debt. This was true on Inauguration Day 1981, when the people hostile to the new President declared him an ideologically febrile and incompetent interloper and those enthusiastic about him anointed him the savior of the Republic; and to some extent it remained true until the day he left office, even after eight years of what under other circumstances would have been a perfectly predictable series of disappointments and betrayals interspersed with a more than fair share of surprises.

BECAUSE it was so widely seen, however mistakenly, to stand outside the terms of normal politics, the Reagan administration has much to teach us about the state of play in American society at the end of the 20th century. Compare, for example, the liberal community's hatred of Ronald Reagan with its hatred of Richard Nixon. Both hatreds were unassuageable—even in the face of the deals with the Soviet Union for which the two men came to be given credit—and both were quite unrelated to the charges on which they were claimed by the media to be based. Thus, in neither the Nixon nor the Reagan administration did spending for domestic welfare decline, a simple fact entirely drowned out, or deliberately obfuscated, in the din of liberal rage.

But the hatred of Nixon was entirely personal, driven by the compulsion to settle an old score—his connection to McCarthyism through the Hiss case. Indeed, people who had long since ceased to harbor any illusions about the nature of the Soviet Union, people who had even ceased to believe in Alger Hiss's innocence, remained faithful to their longing for vengeance against Richard Nixon. For the New Dealers and their political offspring simply could not forgive Nixon for his role in the trauma of their terrible discovery that at least for a little while they would have to drop their illusions and face up to the world as it really, unattractively was. (Nixon, as we know, was ultimately to offer a satisfaction of their longing to punish him so far beyond their hopes that some little time after his downfall they began to leave him in peace.)

Reagan was a very different story. If the liberals' loathing of Nixon had to do with the past and was intensely personal, their loathing of Reagan was quite impersonal—truth to tell, everyone, whether he admitted it or not, was just a little bit undone by the Reagan grin—and had instead to do with panic about the future. Pauline Kael, film critic for the *New Yorker*, has been immortalized for having remarked in 1972 that she simply could not believe Richard Nixon had been reelected by a landslide because she personally knew no one who had voted for him. By 1980, even Miss Kael knew people who, though they may not have confessed to doing so, voted for Ronald Reagan; and that was the trouble. Something new and unnerving was going on, and this openly committed right-winger spoke to it and for it. Within the community that had danced with collective glee at the demolition of Barry Goldwater in 1964, politics was no longer, as in those happy days, a case of Us against Them; it was now Us against Us. As the symbol of this fearful apostasy, Reagan was bound to be treated with fear and contumely no matter how far below his declared intentions he might fall. For with the Reagan administration, to friends and enemies alike, it was the intent, not the result, that mattered most.

WHY this should have been so can be seen far better in hindsight than it could in the heat of the everyday. People spoke of the "Reagan Revolution," but no revolution ever came to pass. There was a cutting of tax rates and something of a reduction in government regulation of business—key among the conservatives' declared revolution-

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ary aims—but neither taxpayers nor businessmen (with the possible exception of bankers) were likely to feel that the government was now to any palpable degree, as the President liked to put it, "off our backs." There was a large and serious effort to refurbish the military, but welcome and consequential as this was, it did not qualify as revolutionary (defense spending, after all, had already started rising in the last years of the Carter administration). There was a genuinely new policy of offering arms and assistance to anti-Communist insurgencies in the Third World, but this policy became ever more conditional and was at critical moments largely, and with considerable mental chicanery, abandoned. And after decades of neglect there was to be a new propaganda war, but this turned out, except in some of Reagan's own speeches, to be for the most part hesitant, apologetic, and underfunded. The promised cuts in spending for such provably mischievous benefactions as our counterproductive welfare system, misconceived foreign aid, or arts grants—to cite only a few examples—never materialized. Affirmative action remained fully in force. Environmentalist Luddites continued largely unhampered to ply their costly trade.

Still, in Ronald Reagan's case, for good and ill, it was the intention that counted. The mere articulation of each of these uncompleted missions of the Reagan agenda—that peculiar amalgam of old conservatism and new anti-liberalism—had set off a response in the liberal community ranging from deep confusion to panic. The reason was that the two decisive Reagan elections bore testimony not so much to a wish for radical new policies as to an open declaration of war over the culture. And a culture war, as the liberals understood far better than did their conservative opponents, is a war to the death.

For a culture war is not a battle over policy, though policy in many cases gives it expression; it is rather a battle about matters of the spirit. (Because our public vocabulary has become so enfeebled, we tend to refer to these matters as "values.") Nor can the battles of such a war be confined, as many people seem to think or hope, to the "soft" fields, like education, human rights, etc. By now, indeed, the fight has been carried to every inch of ground, private as well as public, on which Americans live with one another, and collectively in the world at large. The underlying and all-enveloping and finally nonnegotiable issue is this: are the citizens of the United States entitled, constitutionally, morally, or socially, to rights without limit, or must the rights of truly free and equal people be realized, enriched, and safeguarded by their assumption, individual as well as collective, of the very heavy responsibilities pertaining thereto? In short, are all Americans to be paid the minimal respect owing to a free people of being appropriately rewarded or penalized for their actual conduct?

This is the real question at the center of the controversy between so-called conservatives and so-called liberals. It touches everything from crime to poverty, from the schools and universities to religion and the arts; and it even affects our relations with other nations. Whether held consciously or unconsciously, the proposition at the heart of late-20th-century American liberalism is that when it comes to rights, some individuals and groups are more "equal" than others. Moreover, given how far our society has strayed from a properly grounded, life-enhancing definition of the word freedom, the culture war is apt to be a long and bloody one—especially in view of the ever-lengthening absence of the one major political leader who was both willing and able to speak for the authentic meaning of the insurrection against what liberalism has come to represent.

Was Ronald Reagan, then, some kind of moral hero, and did he understand and deliberately adopt the role he had been fated to play? There is little suggestion of it in *An American Life*. The book is the account, and perhaps in some sense an accurate one, of a man who has lived and moved, veritably skated, entirely on the surface of his life. Naturally in a book of this kind—dictated to, or possibly tape-recorded for, a ghost writer, and leaning on speeches composed by a whole platoon of other writers—a reader is not meant to glimpse any depths of consciousness. Yet something in its eschewal of self-knowledge does seem true to the public figure we came to be familiar with. The Reagan presidency provided so little sense of brooding, or grappling, or anxiety. Neither the unconcealable erraticism of his cabinet, for instance, nor acts of outright betrayal, such as the one committed early on by David Stockman, a young man the President had raised very high, seemed really to reach him. (In the end, when his presidency nearly came unglued over Iran-*contra*, and he responded by saying, first, that selling arms to Iran in the hope of getting back our hostages was not at all in his view an exchange of arms for hostages, and second, that his subordinates who engaged in subterfuge in order to keep supplying the *contras* did so entirely without his knowledge, we were almost prepared to believe that he meant it.) Above all, his dealings with Mikhail Gorbachev—the experience that actually receives the most detailed examination of any discussed in the book—show him to be a man convinced of his personal power and utterly placid about the prospect of using it.

Could such a man really have become the commanding general in a serious struggle for the salvation of the soul of his country? The bewilderment of large groups of people in Western Europe, not to speak of American liberals, over the fact that a decisive proportion of the American citizenry had elected him President provides a clue to the answer. It lies in the very fact that neither Ronald Reagan's ideas nor his responses to the world ever seemed to be in the least complex. Moreover, his preternaturally happy temperament and evident long personal training in protecting himself from turmoil kept him clear of all those temptations to cleverness that are so often the accompaniment of political power.

Reagan was, in other words, suf-

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ficiently at ease with himself, and-sufficiently distanced from those around him, to be willing to say simple things. And probably never before in the country's history had simple things been more in need of repeated and authoritative saying.* Primary among these were that Americans were on the whole a very decent people, that the productive and responsible among them must not be shoved aside for the sake of the willfully unproductive and non-responsible, and that the Soviet Union was an evil empire.

THE liberals laughed at Reagan for simple-mindedness in 1980. By 1984 they were laughing no longer. Instead they were in desperation saying demagogic things about him that they knew, or should have known, not to be true, such as that he was making the poor poorer and the sick sicker and causing people to sleep in the streets, and that his foreign policy was primitive and was bringing us to the brink of nuclear war. This was not Washington in-fighting—and the President was wrong to believe the professional politicians who told him that it was and too often induced him to try to play the game. This was a fight by the liberals to keep the lid on the Pandora's box of their own failed theories and practices.

Thanks in some part to Ronald Reagan—we will never know how much, nor does it really matter how much—that lid is off for good. He left behind him little in the structure of government or the institutions of Washington with which to undo the failures of liberal policy; as George Bush's administration so amply bears testimony, there was no Reagan Revolution, not even the skeleton of one to hang in Bush's closet. But what he did leave behind was something in the long run probably more important—a series of noisy open debates about nothing less than the meaning of decency, the limits of government, the salience of race, the nature of criminal behavior.

It seems unlikely that American politics will soon again turn up a President so inexplicably and yet so perfectly fitted to the particular moment of his appearance. We await the book that tells the true story of how it happened with Reagan. Meanwhile, especially for conservatives, there is a certain benefit now in being able from time to time to avert one's eyes from Washington. Maybe even Ronald Reagan, though he has been left with nothing much to do, is enjoying some of that benefit as well.

* Even as late as 1976, when he mounted a challenge to Gerald Ford for the Republican nomination, most of the ex-liberals who were to become his passionate supporters only four years later did not take Reagan seriously. Though already deeply disaffected toward the liberals—of whatever party—they were still in the early stages of the process of stripping spiritual issues down to their simplicities and possibly a bit snobbish about their reluctance to push this process through to its end.

Movies

Indian Love Call

Richard Grenier

"IF you fly over this land now," said the actor and director Kevin Costner while shooting *Dances With Wolves* in South Dakota, "nobody's here, not really. There's Denver and Kansas City and Rapid City over here. But the reality is—we didn't need to have it." This is what *Dances With Wolves*, a sumptuous new work of romantic arcadianism, hugely popular with the young and ecologically aware, is about. The seizure of Indian lands and the despoliation of Indian cultures in the present territory of the United States are "our Brazilian rain forest," explains Costner, who has dedicated his film to "the truth" about the Indians.

It is unclear from Costner's "we didn't need to have it" whether he is referring to the whole country west of the Mississippi—which would have given him no place to grow up, since he is from near Los Angeles—or whether he imagines that we could have established flourishing, modern, high-technology urban communities in Los Angeles, Kansas City, and Denver, with compact discs, fax machines, and cellular telephones, while leaving the vast expanses of the American West to a stone-age people who knew neither writing, nor metal of any kind, nor the wheel. Costner seems to think that there are no real people out there, or perhaps that they do not live significant lives, but in fact there are twice as many people today in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, as there were in all branches of the Sioux family together at the time the Sioux first encountered the white man.

Romantic idealization of Indians is not new in American history. For

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many, the Indian was Jean-Jacques Rousseau's "noble savage." Although most Americans who were captured by Indians and survived the experience came back with hair-raising accounts of brutality, those who traveled among them under more favorable circumstances, like Francis Parkman in his celebrated *Oregon Trail* or the painter George Catlin, both in the 1840's, often brought back a more attractive picture. (Catlin was convinced that the Indians were descended from the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel, and he was not alone in this.)

Costner, naturally, is at great pains to demonstrate that his Buffalo Indians were not inferior to the invading white man, but in fact were much superior at things that really count. To do so he simply omits everything from period Indian life that modern film audiences would find repugnant, and lays heavy stress on what he considers its strong point: that Indians, as opposed to the white brutes who replaced them, lived in harmony with nature and were environmentally responsible.

Not that the assembled idealisms of *Dances With Wolves* have hurt it at the box office; quite the contrary. It was far and away the number-one commercial hit of quality American films in the last months of 1990, second only to *Home Alone* in the overall standings and easily beating Sylvester Stallone's *Rocky V*. (The novel on which *Dances With Wolves* is based has been at the top of the New York *Times* list of best-selling paperbacks for months.) Perhaps symptomatically, Robert Redford's $45-million, pro-Castro *Havana* and the Sean Connery-John le Carré *Russia House*, both released with some fanfare as "Christmas movies," were doing miserably, the first, according to *Variety*, "among the worst major openings of the year," and the second not much better, dropping like a stone in its third week.

The environmental aspect of *Dances With Wolves* is not the only thing that has made it popular. Like most first-time directors, Costner is heavily dependent on his cinematographer, and Dean Semler has served him well: the resulting movie is very handsome to look at. The herds of buffalo thundering in swirling eddies are spectacular. Indian costumes are beautiful—nothing like the way the Sioux appear in early photographs, but exactly the way Indians dress in the imagination of, perhaps, the couturier Yves Saint Laurent. Most surprisingly, performances by the movie's Indian actors are excellent, one of the principal roles being played by an Oneida Indian from Canada named, of all things, Graham Greene. And the story of *Dances With Wolves* is, after all, "make-believe." In that great buffalo hunt in the sky, perhaps we can all imagine ourselves Indian.

Movie critics, not a knowledgeable group when it comes to history, generally adored the film, and even one of the few who dissented nevertheless assured her readers that it was not "extremist" or "revisionist" but a "middle-of-the-road epic." But there is nothing middle-of-the-road about *Dances With Wolves*, and if it is not revisionist, one wonders what is.

THE film's hero, Lieutenant John Dunbar of the Union Army (played by Costner), is grievously wounded in a nameless battle in the Civil War. Once he recovers, the Army sends him to a deserted post in the West, Indian country. A man who will later find Indians sweet-smelling (which conflicts with contemporary accounts), Dunbar is much offended by the evil smell of the American wagonmaster who transports him westward. Dunbar, we sense, is a man dissatisfied with American civilization. A man without family or friends, no doubt in harmony with nature himself, he is quite happy in total isolation at his one-man army post on the Plains. After incidental brushes with nearby Sioux, he decides to make a clear-cut, friendly approach, galloping off toward a Sioux encampment in the dress uniform of an officer of the Union cavalry, fully armed, the stars and stripes flapping in the breeze at the end of his staff.

His actual entrance to the Sioux encampment, however, is judicious. On the way, by sheer coincidence, Dunbar encounters a Sioux woman who appears to have injured herself and is bleeding. It emerges that she is a young widow who, in mourning for her late husband and in accordance with Sioux custom, is gashing her legs in grief. Although this is one of the story's few authentic references to Sioux culture (the Sioux made a great cult of self-inflicted pain), movie audiences have absolutely no way of discerning that the woman is slashing her legs deliberately and can only assume she has had an accident. She does not look or act like an Indian at all, and in fact conveniently turns out to be white, having been captured by Indians as a little girl. Dunbar succors her, and thus by an amazing combination of circumstances ends up making his approach to the Sioux camp bareheaded, without his stars and stripes, carrying a helpless, wounded woman in his arms. Even so he is at first rebuffed, but then eventually well received.

As the days go by, and Dunbar (called by the Indians "Dances With Wolves" after he frisks around with a wolf) spends more and more time with his remarkably peace-loving Sioux, he becomes at one with the world at last. But on the eve of departing with them for their winter campground, he remembers he has left his journal at his old military post and returns to get it. Fatal mistake. The post is now swarming with uncouth, loathsome U.S. cavalrymen. These American soldiers are truly obnoxious. He refuses to speak English to them, and gives them a piece of his mind in subtitled Sioux. They take umbrage, and slap him in irons, but Dunbar's Sioux friends attack and rescue him. During his escape he kills an American soldier. At this point Dunbar, now a renegade, becomes a liability even to his Sioux friends because the murderous white man will come after them if only because of him. Sadly he bids them adieu, riding off to Canada in the snow with the Indianized girl he has taken to wife, a Sioux without a country.

WHAT is askew in this picture? In the middle of the Civil War, 1862,

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the year of Antietam, the Sioux, threatened by the ever westward movement of the frontier, exploded in what the historians Robert M. Utley and Wilcomb Washburn call "one of the most savage and bloody Indian uprisings in history." On the first day alone, a "nightmare of fire and death" took the lives of 400 settlers. Led by Little Crow, the Sioux swept through the Redwood Agency in Minnesota, massacring the men, burning the buildings, and carrying the women and children off into captivity. No one was spared. In a week almost 1,000 white settlers had died at the hands of the Sioux. "In wide-ranging parties," writes Utley in *The Indian Frontier*, "they spread over the countryside, killing, raping, pillaging, and burning."

Also torturing. Some 30,000 frontier settlers fled to the East, and the outbreak kept the entire Great Plains in turmoil for fully eight years. The Union Army, although short of men because of the war in the East, began operations against the Sioux immediately. Is it probable that a Union cavalry officer in the mid-1860's would pick this moment, with the Sioux on the warpath, to go off like Dunbar on a mission of such innocent good-neighborliness? No officer of the Union Army ever defected to any Indian tribe.

Moreover, even if there had been no violent outbreak in 1862, the Indians of the Great Plains routinely regarded any stranger who suddenly appeared in their hunting grounds as a marauder, and would be likely, if they could manage it, to kill him on the spot. For these Indians were themselves marauders. Thousands and thousands of accounts, some from observers quite well-disposed toward them, describe the celebrated Plains tribes as being absolutely merciless, raiding and scalping and murdering and torturing captives for entertainment—at war with their fellow Indians far more than with whites. True, they were not racist—a child carried off in his early years by a band of Indians was considered one of their own, and Indians cried bitterly when the child, if white, was taken from them—but they treated adult Indians from alien tribes and all other outsiders with no more feeling than if they were insects.

Clark Wissler, the late curator emeritus of the department of anthropology at the American Museum of Natural History, sums up the evidence in his classic *Indians of the United States*:

> One thing is certain, the whites did not bring war to the Dakota [Sioux]. For centuries they had been schooled in arms. Their raides were never against other Dakota tribes, but that was the limit of their friendliness, for not even other members of their Siouan family were safe.

And again:

> Horse stealing was a passion. An almost equal urge was to kill men. Both were frequently attempted in the same raid, and great social acclaim went to the man returning with both scalps and horses.

The great American historian Francis Parkman wrote of the Sioux, with whom he stayed in their glory days, "War is the breath of their nostrils. Against most of the neighboring tribes they cherish a rancorous hatred, transmitted from father to son, inflamed by constant aggression and retaliation." Even the Harriet Beecher Stowe of the Indian movement, Helen Hunt Jackson, in her *Century of Dishonor* (1881), called the Sioux the "most powerful and warlike of all the Northwestern tribes."

IN THE current explosion of pro-Indian books the Sioux occupy a position of choice. To find an unflattering word about them one has to go to an adversarial work such as the excellent new *Pawnee Passage* by Martha Royce Blaine, former chief curator of museums of the Oklahoma Historical Society and wife of Pawnee head chief Garland J. Blaine. The outnumbered Pawnee, who had a particularly bitter relationship with the Sioux, called them Tsu-ra-rat, or "Throat Cutters." According to Mrs. Blaine, the fiercest and most predatory Sioux bands were the Brulé and Oglala. The Brulé pattern of warfare included bringing back heads, feet, hands, and other body parts to their camps, where they were "carried impaled on sticks, and the scalped heads were dragged through the village amidst cries of triumph and finally pounded with rocks and shot at by young boys." Mrs. Blaine writes that the Sioux "killing of women who were population and economic producers" took a terrible toll, with the overall Pawnee population dropping in a period of 45 years (1830 to 1875) from as many as 12,000 to slightly over 2,000. This helps explain why the Pawnee should have wanted to do such an otherwise repellent thing as side with the white man, providing highly effective scouts against the Sioux for the U.S. Cavalry. In *Dances With Wolves* the Pawnee appear in this hateful role, as unqualified villains.

It is hard to reconcile accounts like Mrs. Blaine's not only with *Dances With Wolves* but with the dreamy image of Indians now widespread throughout America's emancipated classes. Thus, an $80,000 full-page advertisement that recently ran in the New York *Times*, Washington *Post*, Los Angeles *Times*, and Chicago *Tribune*, soliciting funds for the construction of a National Museum of the American Indian, had this to say about the Indians:

> . . . Their insight into the delicate balance between man and nature offers us a timely environmental message. Their ethic of "sharing" provides an inspirational model for today's society. Their systems of governance paralleled many of the concepts our forefathers used to frame the Constitution. And their view of the universe and insights into astronomy may well help us chart our future in space. . . .

One wonders with what degree of reverence the proposed museum will approach the subject of scalping, practiced robustly by Plains Indians on the living as on the dead (but making only a discreet appearance in *Dances With Wolves*). For scalping was ecologically quite sound: scalps were used for tent-pole decoration, as ornaments on a horse's bridle. Surplus hair was woven into the warrior's own hair, sometimes with bits of ribbon. Nothing was wasted, everything was recycled. And what about po-

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lygamy, likewise practiced by the Sioux and likewise unmentioned in *Dances With Wolves*? All those healthy young widows with gashed legs were similarly recycled and put to good use to help maintain the "delicate balance between man and nature."

OF ALL the controversies surrounding the Indian Wars, the greatest concerns the events of 1890 at Wounded Knee in the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation of South Dakota. Wounded Knee as an icon of the Indian movement was not always with us. It slumbered for three-quarters of a century, in fact, and only after Dee Brown's *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* (1970)—and then after 200 members of the American Indian Movement occupied the site for 71 days in 1973 demanding a Senate investigation into the condition of the American Indian—did Wounded Knee make it into the big time. National Public Radio, on the recent 100th anniversary of Wounded Knee, ran not one but two long, tearful segments with elderly Sioux women saying they could never forget their inhumane treatment at the hands of the white man.

How did the battle come about? The anthropologist Clyde Kluckhohn considers the Sioux Ghost Dances which led up to Wounded Knee a particularly interesting example of a religious phenomenon associated with colonization. "One of the best established generalizations of social anthropology," he writes, "is that when the pressure of whites upon aborigines reaches a certain point there will be a revival of the ancient religion, or a partially new cult of messianic type will arise." In the 1880's the buffalo were disappearing, and word reached the desperate Sioux—who despised farming as woman's work—that a Paiute Indian in Nevada could talk to the dead and see into the future. Wovoka, who had learned of Jesus and other great medicine men described in the white man's Bible, said he had died, visited God in heaven, and foresaw a world of eternal life without sickness or want.

Soon many Sioux were dancing and throwing themselves into trances in which they dreamed of a world filled with buffalo and free of the white man. Wovoka preached peace, but many Sioux transformed his message into a call to arms to sweep away the white man. The emotional pitch was high. Ghost Dance leaders invented a "ghost shirt," which would protect Sioux warriors against the white man's bullets, and "hostile" Ghost Dancers, all armed, gathered in the northwest corner of the Pine Tree Reservation. Friendly Indians warned authorities that a revolt was under way and that a general massacre was coming. The Army, not unreasonably, began to concentrate large bodies of troops near the major Sioux reservations. Word came that the world's most renowned Indian, Sitting Bull, had embraced the Ghost Dancers. Another Wild West celebrity, Buffalo Bill Cody, drinking heavily, was careening about in the vicinity followed by a pack of newsmen.

LEARNING that Sitting Bull was about to join the Ghost Dancers in their stronghold, authorities ordered Indian police to arrest him. Here there is little controversy. A mass of threatening Ghost Dancers outnumbered the Indian police four to one outside Sitting Bull's cabin, and one Ghost Dancer, Catch-the-Bear, raised his rifle and fired at Bull Head, the police lieutenant. As the policeman fell he fired back, missing Catch-the-Bear and hitting Sitting Bull instead. Some say he shot Sitting Bull deliberately. In any event, Sergeant Red Tomahawk, a fellow member of the Indian police, killed Sitting Bull with one shot—at which point wild fighting broke out, ended only by the arrival of a squadron of the Seventh Cavalry. Result: ten dead, all Sioux.

Wounded Knee, two weeks later on December 29, 1890, was worse. The Seventh Cavalry, Custer's old regiment, was disarming a Sioux band under Big Foot, a Ghost Dancer who had lost faith in the new religion—but the Union general commanding the Seventh Cavalry did not know this. The key to the whole terrible incident is that the Sioux were convinced that if they gave up their weapons they would be massacred. It is not possible to dismiss the notion that at the root of their fear lay the fact that massacres were a pattern of Sioux life—they themselves had certainly massacred Custer's men after the battle of the Little Bighorn.

A fanatical Sioux medicine man named Yellow Bird now began the Ghost Dance, chanting a holy song, urging the warriors to fight and assuring them that the white man's bullets could not penetrate their sacred garments. Then an unbalanced young Sioux named Black Coyote, under circumstances still debated, got off a wild shot. A half-dozen Sioux warriors threw down their blankets and leveled their Winchesters. They fired, the cavalry fired. Murderous hand-to-hand fighting broke out. A bullet carried away the top of Captain Wallace's head. Another shattered Lieutenant Gresham's arm. A volley killed Big Foot and most of the other chiefs.

Smoke and dust obscured the battlefield. Women and children were mixed in with the men. More than 30 dead and wounded U.S. cavalrymen lay on the ground before the cavalry opened up with its Hotchkiss guns, 50 rounds a minute, firing at all groups of Indians that could be seen firing at U.S. soldiers. Despite repeated shouted orders not to fire at women and children, many went down. A Sioux interpreter who had taken the name of Philip Wells, and whose nose had just been nearly cut off by a Sioux warrior's knife, cried out repeatedly in the Sioux language, "The white man is merciful to the wounded enemy when he is harmless. . . . I am a man of your own blood who is talking to you!" He saved some lives. One wounded man who surrendered said of the medicine man Yellow Bird, "He is our murderer. If not for him inciting our young men we would all be alive and happy."

Was Wounded Knee a massacre? Counting the two days of fighting, 28 cavalrymen were killed, as against 128 Sioux. Without for a moment minimizing the deaths of women and children, almost all of them killed by the cavalry's Hotch-

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kiss guns, I submit that when a military force loses one for every four on the other side, it has taken part in a military engagement.

One thing that is today curiously forgotten is that the Ninth U.S. Cavalry, which swung into action on the second day of fighting—coming to the relief of Custer's Seventh Cavalry under heavy Sioux attack—was a black regiment. The Ninth, based at Fort McKinney in Wyoming and under the command of General Guy Henry, was known as "Henry's Brunettes" and also, from its overcoats, as the "Buffaloes." On Christmas eve they were ordered out in the biting cold on a scouting mission to South Dakota's Black Hills. After fording a river through the ice, their uniforms frozen stiff, they dismounted at four in the morning on Christmas day. No Indians. At nine on the evening of the 29th, after 42 miles of fruitless scouting during the day, a courier brought word of fighting at Wounded Knee where, it was said, 5,000 Sioux were mustering to attack the Pine Ridge Agency. The troopers remounted, off again on a 50-mile forced march through a freezing gale. They rode all night, reaching the Agency at dawn, but had to ride out again immediately to rescue their own wagon train, which had come under Sioux attack. One cavalryman was killed and several wounded.

Hardly had the Buffaloes returned from this engagement when word came that the Catholic Drexel Mission seven miles up the valley was now under attack. The Seventh Cavalry was ordered out and was soon hotly engaged, but two hours later a courier reported it was in danger of being overwhelmed, under withering fire from the Sioux who had secured a commanding position on the surrounding ridges. Once more, the Buffaloes were ordered to mount, this time to storm the Sioux emplacements on the heights, an assault they carried out with great success—in an account of the time, "rescuing their hard-pushed white comrades" and "saving the day." Any massacre of Indians was not recorded.

In the opinion of the military historian Cyrus Townsend Brady, writing in 1904, the Ninth had carried out one of the most prodigious rides in the history of the U.S. cavalry. Robert M. Utley, in his *The Last Days of the Sioux Nation* (1963), writes:

> These black troopers rode 100 miles without food or sleep to save the Seventh cavalrymen, who were slowly being crushed by the Sioux in the valley of the Catholic Mission. . . . [A]fter sweeping the ridges with carbine and pistol, [they] lifted the white troopers out of the pocket with such grace that after the battle was over the men of both regiments hugged one another on the field.

In the age of Jim Crow, this was a singular event between black and white military units.

The storming of the ridges by the black Ninth Cavalry must have been known to Dee Brown, since Utley's *The Last Days of the Sioux Nation* is one of his two principal sources for the events he records in *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee.* But, although ostensibly concerned with U.S. race relations, he chooses not to mention the fact—or anything else favorable to the United States—in his highly selective book. I cannot even speculate on the mental gyrations that hearing of General Henry's Buffaloes would produce in Kevin Costner.

Fiction

Literature by Quota

Carol Iannone

In Chinua Achebe's novel *Anthills of the Savannah,* set in contemporary Nigeria, a disaffected government official sounds off before a university audience about his nation's multifarious post-colonial corruptions. "Do you not," he thunders, "form tribal pressure groups to secure lower admission requirements instead of striving to equal or excel any student from anywhere? Yes, you prefer academic tariff walls behind which you can potter around in mediocrity. And you are asking me to agree to hand over my life to a democratic dictatorship of mediocrity? No way!"

It is a sad irony that the phrase "democratic dictatorship of mediocrity" could almost describe not only a country like Nigeria struggling with its ancient multitribal structure but today's United States. Once the paradigm of a society based on the idea of individual merit, and a model for others aspiring to that estate, we have increasingly become subject to a tribalism of our own, and the concomitant assault on the ethic of excellence and merit has affected

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not only the world of American politics but virtually every area of society, including, perhaps most astonishingly, literature and the arts.

In literature, a signal of the new order of things was given a few years ago when three of our nation's most prestigious awards—the Pulitzer Prize, the National Book Award, and the American Book Award—were bestowed upon Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* (1983). Inasmuch as even positive reviewers had taken ample note of this novel's many stylistic and aesthetic flaws, the amazing honor accorded to it seemed less a recognition of literary achievement than some official act of reparation, in this case to the black woman in her capacity both as author and as literary character. Around the same time, another black woman novelist, Gloria Naylor, won a National Book Award and an American Book Award for an even less accomplished novel, *The Women of Brewster Place*, and in 1987, a group of black writers demanded and obtained the Pulitzer Prize for Toni Morrison's novel, *Beloved*.

Although some have pretended that adhering to the new order entails no diminution or abandonment of accepted literary standards, others have not been so sure. Thus, when the feminist contingent at the 1986 international PEN conference loudly protested the "underrepresentation" of women writers on the conference panels, and demanded greater statistical representation in the future both by sex and by race, such prominent authors as Norman Mailer, Susan Sontag, and Nadine Gordimer protested that (in Sontag's words) "literature is not an equal-opportunity employer." Still others, however, have been frank to put their political priorities first. Thus in 1984 the critic Irving Howe championed the writing of "minority subcultures: blacks, women, gays" even while admitting that such an "open culture" would "lead to a momentary decline or even, in some respects, a permanent decline in cultural standards" (although he felt this would not necessarily happen).

The most recent eruption of group politics into literature occurred a few months ago in connection with the 1990 National Book Award (NBA). One member of the five-man jury, Paul West, openly expressed his dismay at the extent to which "ethnic concerns, ideology, and moral self-righteousness" had predominated over literary considerations in the jury deliberations. West, and William Gass, found themselves in opposition to the other three members, Terry McMillan, Philip Lopate, and the jury chairman Catharine Stimpson. A radical feminist who is also the newly elected president of the Modern Language Association, Stimpson claimed that the panel's decisions had been based solely on style and merit—peculiar words from one who in a recent magazine article ridiculed the demand for "objectivity and intellectual rigor" as a "lot of mishmash."

At any rate, the five finalists chosen for the National Book Award this year magically yielded the "rainbow coalition" that has always seemed to elude Jesse Jackson in his political campaigns: one black male, Charles Johnson (*Middle Passage*); one white female, Joyce Carol Oates (*Because It Is Bitter, and Because It Is My Heart*); one Philippine-born female living in the United States, Jessica Hagedorn (*Dogeaters*); one Spanish-born female raised in Latin America, Elena Castedo (*Paradise*); and one Spanish-born expatriate to New York City, Felipe Alfau (*Chromos*).

It is another sad irony that this unseemly spectacle should have been the backdrop against which Charles Johnson's *Middle Passage** was chosen from among the five finalists as the winner. For Johnson, as it happens, holds the profoundly heterodox belief that black artists should be allowed to write as individuals rather than as "spokesmen for the race." "I find it very difficult to swallow the idea that one individual, black or white, can speak for the experience of 30 million people," he asserts in an interview with the Washington *Post*. "Would anyone ask John Updike to be a spokesman for white America?" Like Ralph Ellison, the first black novelist to win the NBA (1953), Johnson especially resents the demand that a black writer limit himself to ideological or "protest" novels. He concludes passionately, "All my life, that's what I've fought for, the absolute freedom for the black artist that we extend to the white artist."

The statement is admirable, even courageous, and it is only a pity that *Middle Passage* does not live up to it. Although in some ways a lively and enjoyable book, the novel falls short at least partly *because* it is a deliberate attempt to counter the plight-and-protest school of novel-writing. In place of the numbed, semi-literate, often brutal and inarticulate characters who people such novels, *Middle Passage* is narrated by Rutherford Calhoun, a newly freed slave who is also highly educated and intensely verbal. Upon his arrival in New Orleans, Calhoun falls in with thieves and gamblers and eventually stows away aboard a ship in order to escape from a forced marriage. Once aboard he discovers that the ship, allegorically named the *Republic*, is sailing to Africa to fetch a shipment of slaves, members of the mystical, magical Allmuseri tribe.

Far from being a marginal outsider, Calhoun freely identifies himself with the motley, restless, roaming, exploratory American spirit that the *Republic* embodies; indeed, *Middle Passage* as a whole gleefully embraces the expansive Western tradition, and teems with echoes of Homer, Coleridge, Melville, and Conrad. At the same time, Calhoun must confront the challenge presented by the Allmuseri in their symbolic role as the "Ur-tribe of humanity itself," a people in touch with "the unity of Being everywhere" and thus a countertype to the spirit of Western philosophical dualism.

To describe *Middle Passage* is to begin to suggest some of its shortcomings. As one otherwise admiring reviewer remarked, the characters "sound as if they're all double majors in classics and philosophy." What is more, these characters often seem less important than

* Atheneum, 209 pp., $17.95.

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the ideas or social types they all too obviously express or stand for. It does not take long to surmise, for example, that the reason the captain of the *Republic* is a dwarf is to suggest the stunted humanity implicit in the pure rationalism he represents, the reason he is a homosexual is to suggest its sterility, the reason a pederast to suggest etc., etc. Of course Johnson is hardly the first to deploy physical traits as marks of psychological or spiritual reality, but the reader of *Middle Passage* more often finds himself piecing together an intellectual puzzle than fathoming the depths of human feeling and behavior.

There are other problems, too. Johnson has fashioned a jocular tone for Rutherford Calhoun that is meant to convey his Whitmanesque nature, but the tone works against the tragic revelation that is attempted at the end of the plot. And the book's self-consciously anachronistic quality, which derives from Johnson's deliberate molding of a 19th-century tale to our current social and cultural dilemmas, sometimes produces inadvertently comic effects. Here is the *Republic*'s captain denouncing, of all things, affirmative action:

> I believe in *excellence*—an unfashionable thing these days, I know, what with headmasters giving illiterate Negroes degrees because they feel too guilty to fail them, then employers giving that same boy a place in the firm since he's got the degree in hand and saying no will bring a gang of Abolitionists down on their necks. . . . Eighty percent of the crews on other ships, damn near anywhere in America, are *incompetent*, and all because everyone's ready to lower standards of excellence to make up for slavery, or discrimination, and the problem . . . the *problem*, Mr. Calhoun, is, I say, that most of these minorities aren't ready for the titles of quartermaster or first mate precisely because discrimination denied them the training that makes for true excellence.

In short, although much in this novel is engaging, and though Johnson's larger ambitions are noble, it is hard to take his prize-winning book seriously as literature.

WHILE Charles Johnson is busy forging a new and more open image of black American life, Joyce Carol Oates, one of the four runners-up, works lugubriously to perfect and expand the dimensions of old-fashioned white liberal guilt. *Because It Is Bitter, and Because It Is My Heart** is set in a small, upstate New York town and relates the story of Iris Courtney, an unhappy and lonely adolescent, product of a broken home and an increasingly alcoholic mother. One day Iris is followed, taunted, and vaguely threatened by a strange, disgusting, subhuman youth. She seeks protection from a black classmate, Jinx Fairchild, who ends up in a fight with the other boy and accidentally kills him in the heat of the moment. Neither Jinx nor Iris goes to the police, and the murder is never traced to them, but thereafter Jinx's life, which to that point had seemed so hopeful—he was doing well in school, on the basketball court, with girls—goes rapidly downhill, as does that of his formerly decent and hardworking family. As for Iris, although she is haunted by the incident and feels guiltily loyal toward Jinx, she goes on to marry into a prominent, privileged, and gifted family.

Oates seems to want to insist on the ineradicable differences in white and black reality: given the same givens—if anything, Jinx starts out with greater prospects than Iris—in the end the opportunities for a white person are much more plentiful, while for blacks the whole social structure is too fragile, too uncushioned, to survive the shock of untoward events. Oates's own attitudes in the novel are nothing if not conventional and nothing if not blatant: elaborately condescending toward blacks unable to understand or surmount the challenges of their own experience, flashily outraged that the life of a wondrous black boy should be wasted on account of a totally worthless sleazeball of a white. Moreover, unlike *Middle Passage*, which for all its faults exhibits liveliness and color, as a novel *Because It Is Bitter* is quite forgettable, its prose skillful enough but so runny that one can fully attend to the narrative while thinking of other things.

STILL more "moral self-righteousness" (in Paul West's phrase) marks Jessica Hagedorn's *Dogeaters*,† a first novel. The story is partly told in flashback by an upper-class Filipino now living in the United States. Through her story and a number of subplots operating independently of her consciousness, the novel offers a presumed panorama of life under Marcos in the 50's, showing the corruption and vacuousness of the privileged classes, the malevolent operations of the military, the hideous poverty of the slums, and the difficulty of securing a decent life for those in between. A major subplot involves a poor young male prostitute whose wretched career must be abandoned when he witnesses the assassination of a liberal opposition leader and winds up joining a band of guerrillas. Presiding over all is the hypnotic spell of popular culture, from American films starring Rock Hudson and Jane Wyman to Filipino soap operas featuring the likes of Nestor Noralez and Lolita Luna. In general, despite some amusing business with aspects of popular culture, and a few felt characterizations, the disparate materials of *Dogeaters* are not very skillfully handled, certainly not skillfully enough to earn the distinction conferred upon it as an NBA finalist.

Class themes are also sounded in Elena Castedo's *Paradise*,** another first novel. A young Spanish family forced to flee Franco's Spain and then Hitler's Germany finds safety in a refugee ghetto in an unnamed Latin American country. But while the father, a political activist and labor organizer, lurches around trying to advance the fortunes of his family and of the working class generally, the mother moves with their two children to the opulent estate of an acquaintance where she aims to travel a rather different route to prosperity. The novel is narrated by one of the children, Solita, in a peppy, plucky, inquis-

* Dutton, 405 pp., $19.95.
† Pantheon, 251 pp., $19.95.
** Grove Weidenfeld, 328 pp., $19.95.

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itive voice that effectively renders her childhood world and her funny, painful growth to awareness, particularly at the hands of the three rather awesomely nasty daughters of the estate. Like Hagedorn, Castedo also scores political points, this time in portraying the social inequities of Latin America, but she does not allow them to overpower the whole. In this respect and others, *Paradise* is a more successful novel than *Dogeaters*, if still not quite at a level warranting nomination for a national prize.

FELIPE ALFAU'S *Chromos** is a special case, a book written in the 40's but not published until last year. Now eighty-eight and long retired from writing—his one other novel, *Locos: a Comedy of Gestures*, appeared in 1936 and was reprinted last year—Alfau is a curious figure. As a member of the insular Spanish community in New York City (sometimes called Peninsular Spanish to distinguish it from the Hispanic), he had remained squarely outside of the mainstream of modern literature, much as Spain has always remained outside of mainstream Europe. Nevertheless, and building only on his Spanish literary forebears, Alfau (according to a recent interview) found his way to experimental postmodernism in the manner of Barth, Barthelme, and Pynchon.

Chromos is a virtual hall of mirrors, a novel within a novel within a novel. It is based upon the lives of a group of "Americaniards" living in New York City during the 30's, and is written in a kind of forced, formal, nonidiomatic "Iberian English." As reviewers have noted, the novel is in a large sense about failure: the failure of a transplanted Spaniard to render his experience in English, the failure to be both American and Spanish, the failure of art to transmute reality beyond the level of crude sentimentalities, or *chromos* (the Spanish word for calendar art), the failure of love. To these, unfortunately, one might add still another failure, the failure to be terribly interesting. In the manner of many postmodern novels, *Chromos* is based upon an intriguing premise that never really quickens into life and sooner or later becomes tiresome.

THE fact that *Chromos*, a book that deserved publication as a literary curiosity and not much else, wound up being nominated for a National Book Award only serves to point up a final sad irony. The theme of this novel is the perennial need of human beings for the clarifying and transforming experience of art, of the imagination. That need remains as great as ever, but in literature as in other fields of cultural endeavor it has never been and never will be satisfied by sacrificing the demands of excellence to the "democratic dictatorship of mediocrity."

* Dalkey Archive, 348 pp., $19.95.

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The Old Virtues

THE WAY OF THE WASP: HOW IT MADE AMERICA, AND HOW IT CAN SAVE IT, SO TO SPEAK. By RICHARD BROOKHISER. *The Free Press. 171 pp. $19.95.*

Reviewed by MICHAEL NOVAK

IT IS about time someone spoke up for the WASP. Since this is America, the task has naturally fallen to a descendant of an immigrant German Catholic family who was brought up as a Methodist and is now lapsed, who knows only two Protestants in Manhattan, one of them Japanese, and who is married to a descendant of Russian Jews. Thus does Richard Brookhiser, a graduate of Yale, senior editor of the *National Review*, contributor to *Time*, speechwriter for George Bush in 1982, introduce himself.

Brookhiser begins by recounting the WASP-bashing during the Bush campaign of 1988—a continuation of a theme in American politics that has been sounding since the late 60's and early 70's. He cites in evidence my own book, *The Rise of the Unmeltable Ethnics* (1971). What some of us then wanted was breathing room in which to discover and express our own non-WASP identity (status recognition, if you will). The redirection of American politics we recommended—back toward the "little platoons" of family, neighborhood, and work—had British precedents, in Edmund Burke, for example. But it did not entail the collapse of the larger platoon. I can still recall the astonishment I felt at the time when a fortress I thought both admirable and impregnable was suddenly surrendered without a fight.

Brookhiser pursues two theses. First, early America was created by WASPs: "They wrote the rules; everyone else played by them. If America had been settled and founded by Frenchmen or Spaniards, as it might well have been, it would be a different place now. And a worse one." His second thesis follows logically: "Any project to improve or repair the country the WASPs made should be attentive to its particular patterns of thought and forms of behavior. If the only living and healthy values to which the whole country has access are WASP values, then anything restorative or profitable we try to accomplish has to draw on them."

Roughly agreed (the "only" is a bit strong). But what are WASP values? In the most interesting chapter of his book, Brookhiser lists six "traits" that define the essential WASP character: conscience, industry, success, civic-mindedness, use, antisensuality. How conscience leads to industry, industry to success, success to civic-mindedness, and how all of these require and issue in a sense of practicality, are matters familiar enough. In a way that I at first found irritating but then helpful, Brookhiser prints his terms in a clockwise diagram, with conscience at noon and civic-mindedness at six, and the others distributed evenly in between. This allows him some suggestive pairings: civic-mindedness broadens conscience and incidentally gives the lie to the common accusation that the American conscience is radically individualistic. Antisensuality helps to modify industry and vice versa, as use (or, better, utility or practicality) illuminates success. More than many other cultures, WASP culture insists on a certain inner self-government; it construes freedom to mean doing not what one wishes but what one ought; it insists upon unbroken attention to the bite of guilt.

From his discussion of WASP traits Brookhiser moves to non-WASPs and the world they have aspired to and then, with greater originality, to a chapter on dissident and rebellious WASPs who have aspired to other worlds. Here he briefly considers Henry Adams, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and (in an unusual treatment) Woodrow Wilson. Then he broaches the cultural rebellion of the 1950's and 1960's which aimed to overturn the nation's founding ethos, and the decline of the WASP character in three quite different areas: Wall Street, art (especially writing), and the churches. Finally, he writes of our current, "post-WASP world" and how we have gotten there. Somehow, having for centuries beaten back all challengers, the leaders of the WASP elite lost their nerve, and a new permissiveness—a new centrifugal dispersion—took over. Brookhiser's emblem is a scene in Manhattan nowadays: a man in clean chinos and new track shoes, pissing on the sidewalk.

BROOKHISER blames it all on the WASPs themselves; they did themselves in. But how? He declines to accept two possible explanations: the rise of a New Class of technocrats and public-sector professionals, and the rapid spread of anti-bourgeois modernism in the universities. Rather, adducing both Teddy Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson, he traces the fault back to the WASP embrace of Progressivism; with this, he believes, the foundations of conscience were sapped. Once conscience was made to yield to the "spirit of the age," it was only a matter of time before a thoroughgoing counterculture emerged, complete with mirror images of the six WASP traits: self, ambition, gratification, group-mindedness, diffidence, and (aesthetic) creativity. Once conscience had accepted progress as its guide, anyone—and everyone—could speak for it. In place of civic-mindedness, group-mindedness grew, and with it the jungle of competing interests. No longer in evidence was a single standard that all must meet. And for the derelic-

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tion of its elites, the whole society has had to pay. "The George Bushes of this world bear more responsibility for the pissing in the streets than they may be aware of."

CAN the way of the WASP be saved? Brookhiser is rather more certain that it must be than that it can be. I agree that it must be, because America's WASP ways have had a great deal to do with American success. Other areas of the world have natural resources of comparable value, frontiers to inspire the imagination, etc., but they have not succeeded; our special ethos is also our comparative advantage. Nor is it difficult to agree that the health of America's institutions depends upon certain moral and cultural qualities of the sort Brookhiser identifies, to keep the system from internal destruction. Yet as Brookhiser also suggests, half of our current WASP elite lacks "the vision thing," while the other half pursues an errant (progressive) vision. Sometimes, indeed, the battle can be seen to rage within the same person. George Bush, who makes altogether too many appearances in this book for its own rhetorical good, evokes many of the virtues of his heritage; but he also exemplifies many of its weaknesses. On such a basis, how is the WASP way to be restored?

Brookhiser would have done well to imagine analogues of WASP ways, or even improvements upon them, of a sort that would help the American system fulfill its promise. He is right that our system can be made to work only upon the basis of some finite range of moral strengths. But in limiting the possibilities to six traits, he narrows his own vision. It was, after all, Ronald Reagan, a WASP of decidedly different traits, who inspired the nation with esteem for its traditional ways and the strengths of its past.

One of the glories of this society, designed and for so long presided over by WASPs, is that in becoming Americans we all take on responsibility for maintaining the ethos which secures our rights. That ethos no longer belongs solely to WASPs. It is conceivable that, having assimilated the WASP way, others in their gratitude may be able to join in preserving and promoting it without suffering the WASPs' historic failure of nerve.

To Market, To Market

THE MYTH OF AMERICA'S DECLINE: LEADING THE WORLD ECONOMY INTO THE 1990's. By HENRY R. NAU. *Oxford University Press. 424 pp. $24.95.*

Reviewed by IRWIN M. STELZER

"THIS book is about America's role in the world economy." So opens Henry Nau's attempt to set forth the policies that will permit America to continue to lead the world. Unfortunately, that is among the few digestible sentences in this probably significant tome.

Nau's summary of one prong of his argument gives the reader a clue to what, stylistically, is in store. He asserts that

> international politics and economics are about not only cycles of power and wealth, as structuralist views contend, but also a search for shared political community in which human societies, most recently organized in national units, freely choose alternative forms of domestic political society and then compete to establish, among themselves, a world community that satisfies higher goals of political and human development.

Things do not get easier.

Nau's inattention to the intellectual limitations of many of his readers is a pity, for he has an important message: that America can continue to matter, *if* it adheres to "the liberal political values" and market-oriented economic policies that contributed so much to postwar prosperity.

Such policies, Nau continues, characterized the golden age of Bretton Woods, with its "policy triad" of free trade, flexible domestic markets, and price stability. These policies produced two dec-

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IRWIN M. STELZER *is a resident fellow at the American Enterprise Institute and U.S. political and economic columnist for the (London)* Sunday Times.

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ades of sustained economic growth. Their subsequent neglect created some of the problems we face today: undisciplined budget deficits, persistent inflation, and serious trade imbalances.

There is little to quarrel with here. "Non-inflationary market-oriented domestic policies" are indeed crucial to the maintenance of "open and efficient international markets." So long as governments keep their hands off, resources will flow to wherever in the world they can most efficiently be used. And markets will accomplish this more completely and effectively than a conference of world leaders.

It is also difficult to disagree with Nau that the world would be a better place if major industrial countries could come together on a set of coordinated, non-inflationary, free-market policies. But how is this to be achieved? We

> have to persuade a majority of participants in the wider cocoon of social and political forces within a particular national or international society to support these choices and to translate them eventually into official policies within the more immediate bureaucratic policy-making process.

The difficulty of accomplishing that chore may well exceed the difficulty of comprehending the sentence.

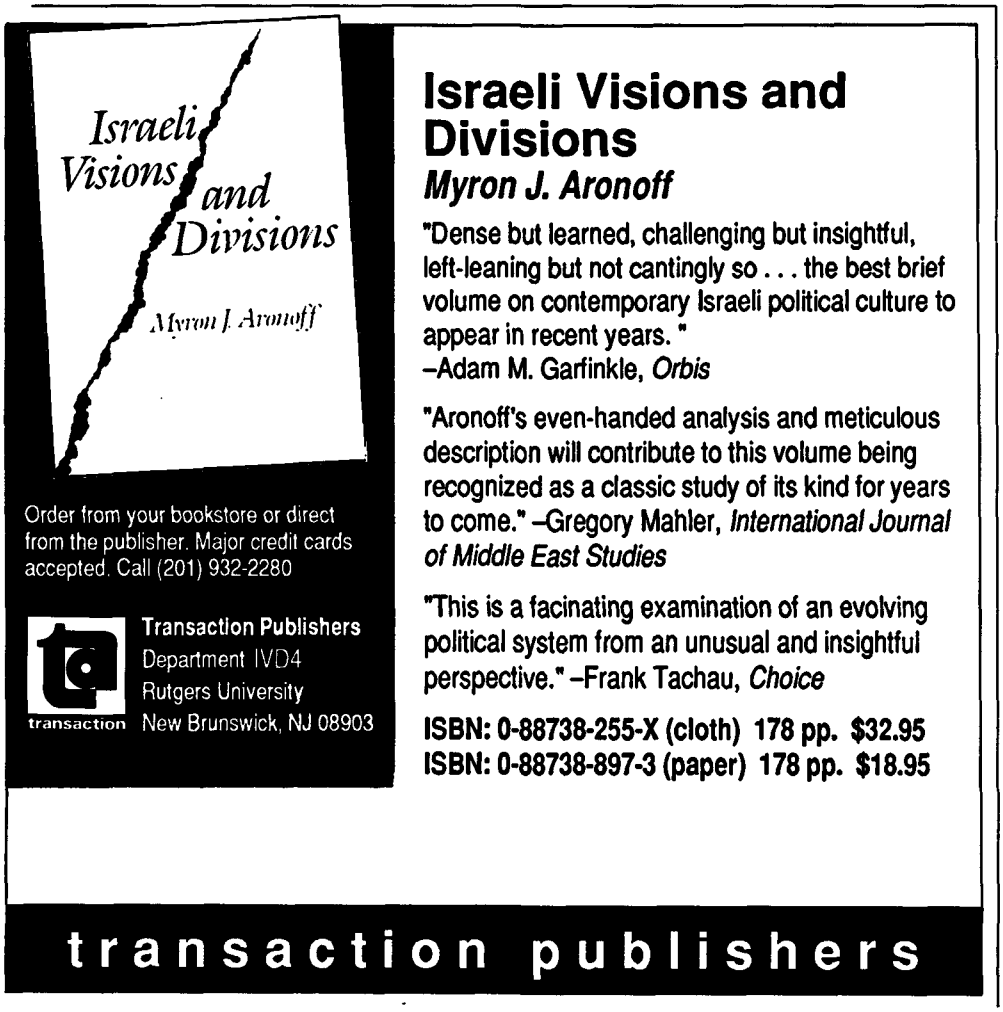
TURNING to the U.S. role in the world, Nau argues that American leadership since the end of World War II improved "the human condition," and that it can and should still present itself as a force for "individual dignity and freedom." And Nau is no starry-eyed idealist. He recognizes that authoritarian systems hostile to American interests must be contained: he favors deterrence, limitation of exports of strategic technologies, and an end to subsidized wheat and other exports to Russia. And he is tough-minded about America's role in Eastern Europe: like this reviewer (COMMENTARY, January 1990), he opposes a Marshall Plan for Eastern Europe, arguing persuasively that such largesse would only reduce the incentive to reform.

Nor have *glasnost* and *perestroika* persuaded Nau to join the peacemongers and isolationists lately emerging on the extreme Right and extreme Left of American politics. "In a period of transition from illiberal to liberal societies in Europe, the need for deterrence and alliances does not end; it merely changes form." America should not leave the alliance that has ensured world peace for almost half a century. And it should not even encourage Germany or Japan to assume a greater share of our defense burden, lest they use that as an excuse to remilitarize.

In short, Nau's world is still a dangerous place: Russia might regress, in the manner of China (it has already begun to do so); a reunited Germany might regain its historic appetite for *Lebensraum*; "ethnic violence" remains a possibility. And in that dangerous world a market-oriented, democratic, still-powerful America can play a leading and positive role.

All true enough—though Irving Kristol and others have been arguing lately that the end of the cold war makes our European defense paraphernalia an anachronism. In the case of Japan, however, one might reasonably object to Nau's contention that we should continue to defend that country's oil supply lest transferring the burden to the Japanese create a monster which might some day turn on us. Surely, there is a middle ground between a militarily threatening Japan and one that spends twice as much on a film company as it may contribute to our efforts in the Persian Gulf.

THERE is room, too, for disagreement with at least some of Nau's views on our economic policy since the end of World War II. He suggests, for example, that our abandonment of the Bretton Woods agreement, and our shift from "adjustment to finance," somehow caused Japan and others to adopt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the deplorable mercantilist policy of protecting domestic markets while exploiting export markets. But Japan needed no encouragement from us to pursue such aggressive, beggar-thy-neighbor policies. Nor is it quite fair to compare our lapses from a free-trade policy with Japan's systematic refusal to open its markets—a difference in degree in this area amounts to a difference in kind.

I am also inclined to regard Nau's criticism of Ronald Reagan as somewhere between excessively harsh and unwarranted. Nau blames on Reagan the failure of the 1985 effort to cut the deficit. He criticizes the President for sticking to his 1984 campaign pledge not to cut back the cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs) in the Social Security program. "The most popular President in two decades," Nau writes, could have demonstrated "leadership" by reneging on his promise. This, however, assumes two things: that it is good policy to woo votes by lying about one's planned economic policies, and that elimination of the COLAs would have been the correct policy choice. The first is certainly wrong, and the second not clearly correct, given the alternatives: trimming the pork in the budget and eliminating many counterproductive welfare programs.

Concerning this last point, Nau also criticizes Reagan for "an unfortunate abdication of presidential leadership" in supporting cuts in welfare benefits to the poor when he "could have led a reasonable effort to pare back Social Security, Medicare, and pension programs without affecting the seriously needy among the recipients." Again, two assumptions: that reduction of welfare payments necessarily hurts, rather than helps, "the seriously needy"; and that Congress would in the end have rejected the bipartisan efforts of Jack Kemp and Claude Pepper to preserve Social Security, COLAs and all. Both assumptions are, at minimum, questionable.

FINALLY, it seems fair to object to Nau's occasional calls to contradictory action. He would have America bear "leadership responsibility" in foreign-policy matters, but take action "to the maximum extent possible only on a common basis" with its allies. Ironically—this book was written before Saddam Hussein stole Kuwait—in the very next paragraph Nau says: "[T]he United States and its allies should agree to apply economic sanctions only in situations where they are psychologically prepared to back them up with sterner political or military measures. . . ." Such a policy—getting our allies to express willingness to take the last step before committing themselves to the first step of an embargo—would have been a prescription for paralysis in the Middle East. Nau concludes by rallying us to the banner of an "assertive, but tolerant, national purpose." It would be difficult, indeed, to march to the tunes of two such different drummers.

Notwithstanding these objections, Nau's basic theses, that the world should put its faith in markets rather than ministers, and that America must exert economic, moral, and military leadership in a still-dangerous world, are unassailable—even if somewhat inaccessible.

A Wonderful Life

LUDWIG WITTGENSTEIN: THE DUTY OF GENIUS. By RAY MONK. *The Free Press. 580 pp. $29.95.*

Reviewed by STEVEN BELLER

"TELL them I've had a wonderful life." These were the last words of perhaps the greatest, certainly one of the most influential, philosophers of our century. In Ray Monk's superb biography we see just how wonderful Wittgenstein's life was.

Not that it was especially happy. It was full of personal suffering, much of it self-imposed. There was the fact of his Jewish ancestry, which weighed on him, and there was his strained relationship to his own sexuality, itself tinged with tragedy (the two men whom he truly loved, David Pinsent and

STEVEN BELLER *is the author of* Vienna and the Jews 1867-1938: A Cultural History *(Cambridge University Press).*

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Francis Skinner, died tragically young, and the one woman whom he planned to make his wife rejected him). Moreover, no one with Wittgenstein's immense ethical seriousness would have been a likely candidate for happiness in the usual sense.

For all that, his life was wonderful. It was, for a start, full of wonders. Wittgenstein founded not one but two of the major movements of modern philosophy. His genius as a technical logician was dumbfounding; an awestruck Bertrand Russell virtually gave up serious philosophy not long after meeting him, and even when he later disagreed with Wittgenstein's ideas, he retained his respect for his genius.

It is not Wittgenstein's brilliance, however, which stands out in this biography—after all, that is to be expected—but rather the awe-inspiring qualities of the man. In his never-ending struggle with himself, his insistence on personal integrity in thought and deed, and his deep insights into the human condition and the religious nature of man, Wittgenstein in Monk's portrayal is revealed as a hugely sympathetic personality. His life, full of wonders, also fills the reader with wonder.

WITTGENSTEIN was born in 1889 into one of the most remarkable families of late 19th-century Central Europe. His grandfather, Hermann Christian, had (as the name suggests) left Judaism and converted to Protestantism, eventually settling in Vienna, the home of his wife, also a convert from Judaism. Wittgenstein's father, Karl, married a woman of Catholic religion but again of Jewish descent (on her father's side), Leopoldine Kalmus. Karl went on to become the most influential man in the Austrian steel industry, and one of the richest in the Hapsburg monarchy. He was also a great patron of the arts, especially music, as indeed his father had been before him. All this took place in the cultural hothouse of Vienna 1900.

Wittgenstein lost his Catholic faith in his teens, when he was attending the same technical school in Linz as Hitler. To ease the transition, his older sister Hermine gave him the works of Schopenhauer and Otto Weininger. Of the two, Schopenhauer was by then required reading for any man of culture. But Weininger was a different case entirely.

Usually dismissed as an aberration of his time, a self-hating Jew and a misogynist who committed suicide in 1903 at the age of twenty-three, Weininger was to exercise an important influence on Wittgenstein's view of the world. What we have in Monk's account is in effect a portrayal of Weiningerian man. This book's epigraph, indeed, is a quotation from Weininger's *Sex and Character*: "Logic and ethics are fundamentally the same, they are no more than duty to oneself." Monk makes clear just how much Wittgenstein took this maxim to heart throughout his life.

DURING World War I, Wittgenstein experienced a kind of religious conversion. By 1916 his reading of Tolstoy and Dostoevsky, combined with his background in Schopenhauer and Weininger, had led him to a belief in God and Christianity, if in a typically abstract, almost solipsistic, way. God was conscience, Christianity not a matter of doctrine but entirely of practice, of attitude. Monk is particularly good at describing how the spiritual turmoil of those years transformed what had started in Wittgenstein as a pure interest in logic (he had shaken off his father's wish that he take up a technical vocation and gone to Cambridge to become Russell's protégé) into the postwar *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, with its mysterious statements on the self, ethics, and aesthetics.

Following his new-found religious fervor, Wittgenstein, after time in a prisoner-of-war camp, dedicated himself to an ascetic life of service. He gave away his immense fortune to other members of his family and trained to be a teacher in the Austrian countryside. This was not a success; eventually Wittgenstein returned to civilization, first becoming an architect and then going back to philosophy. Throughout the 1920's he remained in touch with his former Cambridge friends and was also consulted by the group of philosophers who came to be known as the Vienna Circle. But it was only on his return to Cambridge in January 1929 that his career as a philosopher really resumed. Monk quotes John Maynard Keynes on his erstwhile friend's return: "Well, God has arrived. I met him on the 5:15 train."

By now Wittgenstein was in the process of completely revising his notions of language and logic, a process which led in his "second" philosophy to a view of language understood in terms of its use and its dependence on culture and tradition. In the 1930's, too, he became increasingly concerned to counteract what he saw as the unjustified and harmful worship of science—unjustified because scientific truths could never have absolute validity, harmful because the assumption of scientific generality could lead people to neglect the wonder of the world's irreducible variety, and to misunderstand what was truly important in life: the world of the spirit, of ethics and aesthetics, that which could be shown but not said, as he had so famously put it in the *Tractatus*. In this he was still following Weininger, and was clearly deeply influenced as well by Spengler. It is a huge irony that Wittgenstein, who sympathized with the Communist Left (at one point he wanted to live in the Soviet Union), should have developed in his later philosophy one of the strongest conservative critiques of progressivism and scientism.

WHEN Wittgenstein died in 1951 he was given a Roman Catholic burial. In Monk's view this was appropriate, in the sense that Wittgenstein had led a devoutly "religious" life; but Monk also asserts, rightly, that Wittgenstein was not a Catholic. Nor was his religion Jewish; indeed, he was about as far from traditional Judaism as any product of assimilation could be. Wittgenstein's religion, shaped by Christian forms and the concepts of German idealism, was very much his own, his god the god of his conscience.

Until the 1930's Wittgenstein

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seems hardly to have acknowledged his Jewish descent. In the family it was something which, while not to be denied, one was proud to have overcome. What little we know seems to suggest a negative attitude, not surprising given the influence of Weininger (and Karl Kraus). Wittgenstein did, however, discuss his own "Jewishness" in a smattering of enigmatic and rather cutting notes which he made in 1931. Of these Monk comments that "thankfully" Wittgenstein subsequently made no more. This is the one point in his excellent book where I think Monk goes astray, for (as Rush Rhees once pointed out) Wittgenstein's cryptic remarks are not necessarily negative but may instead constitute a recognition that Jews—including, in this context, himself—are different. One need not agree with Wittgenstein's self-assessment to want to know more about what he thought his own "Jewishness" consisted in.

One of the 1931 remarks asserts, for instance, that Spengler was justified in placing Jewish thinkers, among them Otto Weininger, in a different category from Westerners. What is intriguing here is that in *The Decline of the West* Spengler praised Weininger, calling him a Jewish saint and his moral struggle with himself "one of the noblest spectacles ever presented by a late religiousness." Moreover, Spengler linked Weininger to primitive Christianity, whose true character, he claimed, was never understood in the "Greek" and "German" West. In this light, Wittgenstein's remark of 1942, quoted by Monk, that his own religion was not "Greek" but "100-percent Hebraic," takes on a significance which Monk seems to miss. If this *was* his view of his religiosity, is there a sense in which he was right about it?

But a question like this must remain highly speculative, fittingly so in the case of such an enigmatic and complex figure. What is quite clear is that Ray Monk has provided us with a compelling and fascinating picture of not only a great philosopher, but a remarkable human being.

Church and State

UNDER GOD: RELIGION AND AMERICAN POLITICS. By GARRY WILLS. *Simon & Schuster. 445 pp. $24.95.*

Reviewed by TERRY EASTLAND

IT IS impossible, Garry Wills contends, to understand American politics apart from religion; yet the media, and most political commentators, show a "willed ignorance" of the subject. He is quite right. In 33 chapters discussing various political figures—including some who ran for President in 1988—events in American history, and such contemporary issues as abortion, pornography, and feminism, Wills undertakes to redress the balance.

Had Wills kept his own views in check, he might have produced a worthy book, for there are parts of *Under God* in which he is both a skillful reporter and a shrewd analyst. Thus, in dealing with Gary Hart, Wills carefully explores the Holiness movement and the morally strict Church of the Nazarenes in which Hart was raised. The perfectionist impulse in his religious background is something which Hart as a presidential candidate wanted to hide even as it shaped his own behavior, including his strained discussions of his publicized adulteries. As Wills observes, Hart "made himself a powerful symbol of the problem presented by a secular politics cut off from its past moral vocabulary."

As for the Democrats' 1988 presidential nominee, Wills finds Michael Dukakis so completely estranged from faith of any kind as to have become "the first truly secular candidate we had ever had for the presidency." It is hard to disagree with this, or with Wills's remark that it was precisely Dukakis's secularism that blinded him to the force of campaign issues involving the Pledge of Allegiance and the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU).

In turning to the American past, Wills discusses at length the Scopes trial of 1926 in which a teacher, backed by the ACLU, challenged a Tennessee law forbidding state schools from teaching evolution in biology courses. "Almost everything about the Scopes trial has been misrepresented," writes Wills, and he proceeds to debunk the conventional wisdom which holds that Scopes's lawyer, the famous defense attorney Clarence Darrow, together with the writer H.L. Mencken, whose reports on the trial excoriated the locals as know-nothings, won there a great progressive victory over the dark forces of religion. Belying such a simplistic reading is the fact that William Jennings Bryan, who appeared for the prosecution, was a man who, although opposed to the Social Darwinism of Darrow and Mencken, integrated "progressive politics and evangelical moralism." Unfortunately, declares Wills, the Scopes trial "sealed off from each other, in mutual incomprehension," these two forces which "had hitherto worked together in American history."

In a series of chapters that are perhaps his best, Wills discusses the millennialist impulses in American politics and their Puritan origins. Particularly noteworthy is his chapter on Lincoln, in which he analyzes that President's use of biblical imagery, especially of apocalypse, to frame the issues of slavery and union, while also emphasizing the central place occupied by the Declaration of Independence in Lincoln's political theology.

BUT these are the better moments in *Under God*. Too often Wills is less the discerning analyst than the leftist Catholic advocate. For example, he notes of Mario Cuomo's much-discussed 1984 speech at Notre Dame on abortion that it "was bound to be unsatisfactory" since Cuomo, even as he accepted the Church's teaching as personally valid, failed to show any enthusiasm for it. "He merely *receives* it passively in his own case—despite the fact that this particular teaching indicates that murder is being committed." But then instead of documenting how Cuomo as an

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elected politician has continued to avoid facing the issue of abortion as murder, Wills faults him for failing to adopt a "communal" approach that would include "better education on contraception" and "wider distribution of condoms." Wills concedes that such an approach is at odds with the Church "line" on abortion, but argues that the line itself is "obsolete." In short, he wants not only contraception and condoms but a different Catholic Church.

Elsewhere in *Under God* the author's politics work some quite astonishing effects. Thus, Wills is so enamored of Jesse Jackson that he witlessly endorses such effusions by Jackson as this:

> Conservatives and progressives, when you fight for what you believe, right-wing, left-wing, hawk, dove—you're right from your point of view, but your point of view is not enough. But don't despair. Be as wise as my grandmama. Pool the patches and the pieces together, bound by a common thread. When we form a great quilt of unity and common ground, we'll have the power to bring about health care and housing and jobs and education and hope to our nation.

So great is his approval of "Preacher Jesse" that Wills never stops to ask just how conservatives and progressives, Right and Left, hawk and dove, can all be right, much less how they can lie down together in peace.

Wills credits the defeat of Supreme Court nominee Robert H. Bork to voter-registration drives in the South undertaken by Jesse Jackson. Of the communities that formed ranks against Bork, he writes that they constituted "the real moral majority in America," and he urges the Democratic party to align itself with this majority of the "disadvantaged," adding that "most groups in America think of themselves as disadvantaged in one way or another." Yet it hardly needs saying that far more was involved in Bork's defeat than voter registration, and Wills's psychological estimate of how Americans think of themselves reveals nothing more than how *he* thinks they should think of themselves. Here his infatuation with Jackson drives

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The U.N. and the Middle East
Is it a proper forum to sit in judgment

From following what's happening in the United Nations it's easy to come to the conclusion that Israel is the source of most of the problems in the world. And that, if Israel were only less "intransigent" and if it would yield the administered territories of the "West Bank" and Gaza, peace would descend on the Middle East.

What are the facts?

■ The United Nations seems obsessed with Israel. The level of U.N. preoccupation with Israel is totally out of proportion with events in that country. In the course of the last ten years, the General Assembly has entertained 175 hostile resolutions dealing with Israel and the "Palestinian problem". During that entire time it did not once criticize any of the Arab countries. Every year, the General Assembly goes through the charade of considering the expulsion of Israel from the United Nations. In 1985, the General Assembly of the U.N. covered itself with everlasting shame by declaring that Zionism is racism. The Security Council has proposed numerous anti-Israel resolutions during the last three years. All of them would have passed unanimously or with lopsided majorities had it not been for vetoes of most of them by the United States.

■ Recently, the attention of the United Nations was particularly engaged by two incidents in Israel, namely the killing of seven Arab laborers by a demented Israeli solitary gunmen, and by the death of 17 Arabs on the Jerusalem Temple Mount. In that incident, a mob of 4,000 Arabs, thrown into a frenzy by their clerics, loosed fusillades of rocks and other missiles on Jewish worshippers gathered for prayers by the Western Wall. In both cases, the Security Council dropped all other business, promulgated anti-Israel resolutions and requested that teams of "observers" be sent to Israel, presumably to report on the alleged abuses perpetrated on the "Palestinians" by that country and by its government. One wonders why, regardless of the merits of the anti-Israel accusations, any "observers" at all would be required. Israel, and the territories administrated by it, are not some remote region in some outlying area of a dark empire. There are more journalists, photographers, television crews, reporters, parliamentary delegations, professional groups, fact finding missions, and human rights activists there than in any other spot on the globe. Never in modern history has there been a spot so microscopically and so meticulously inspected as the small country of Israel. One questions why a delegation of U.N. observers would be required and what mischievous purposes their observations could possibly serve.

■ The obsession of the United Nations with Israel and its alleged violations is the more remarkable considering that organizations's total disregard of the unspeakable barbarities of so many other nations in the Middle East. For instance, the Security Council meeting that resolved to send a delegation to Israel to investigate "abuses" was inspired by the PLO, whose numberless outrages -- including the killing of Israeli athletes at the Munich Olympics, the bombing of tourist buses, old-age homes, synagogues, airports, airliners, and so much more -- have never received the slightest attention by the U.N. Nor have the unspeakable human rights abuses and sickening crimes by the Arab states ever been discussed in that body. These crimes, instigated and supported by Arab governments, include the slaughter in 1982 of over 20,000 Syrian citizens in Hama, at the command of Hafez Assad, that country's president (and our most recent ally!); the poison-gassing of over 5,000 Iraqi Kurdish citizens by Saddam Hussein; over 100,000 Lebanese civilians killed by PLO gunmen, and other militias and terrorist groups; Egyptian troops cold-bloodedly killing over 100 rioting police in 1986; the Algerian police indiscriminatingly machine-gunning hundreds of its own citizens in a few days of rioting; the Libyans assassinating untold numbers of their opponents inside the country and outside; hundreds of Iranian pilgrims ruthlessly being gunned down by the Saudis during the pilgrimage to Mecca; the hundreds of thousands being killed in the Sudan in inter-racial massacres, Lebanon's rape by Syria, and so much more. The United Nations did not concern itself with any of these.

Among the hypocritical accusers of Israel in the U.N. Security Council are the French and the Soviets, merchants of death who have supplied Iraq with the weaponry, the materials and the technology to produce chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons. Without them, the present situation would not have arisen. These same cynics bitterly denounced Israel for destroying the Iraqi nuclear capability in 1981. Had Israel not done that, Iran would now in all likelihood be an atomic wasteland and no U.S. or U.N. presence in the area would now be possible. And such stalwart democrats and practitioners of human rights as Yemen, Cuba, Zaire, and Malaysia also sit on the Security Council and cynically condemn Israel, the only people in the entire Middle East that have a freely elected government and that contributed to the Western legacy the very concepts of justice and of human rights. Is the U.N. a proper forum to sit in judgment about Israel and about the events in the middle East? The evidence is clear and the answer is obvious.

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him not only to dubious analysis but to suicidal (for Democrats) political advice.

WILLS concludes his book with an unsatisfactory treatment of church and state. It is now "our task in a society of increasingly complex articulation," he declares, "to complete the effort of [James] Madison in removing religion from state ceremony and proclamations." But he does not specify what he means by this—presumably he would join with the ACLU in trying to ban every last crèche and menorah from the public square, every last amen from public schools and the halls of Congress. And he fails even to note, much less to address, the much larger issues of religion and politics before the nation today: should the public-school system remove not only religious belief but also instruction about religions and religious history? Should states provide or refuse relief to taxpaying parents who send their children to parochial or church-related schools? More generally, should states make accommodations in their laws that take into account the religious beliefs and practices of the American people?

Wills is not unaware that in our society litigation has become a form of politics by other means. But he offers little discussion of the varieties of litigation that have affected religion and morality. Nor does he examine the impact of relevant judicial decisions, especially by the Supreme Court. He simply denies that "recent court decisions have made religion less important or effective in America or even in our politics."

Yet a study of these decisions bears on any sound analysis of the origins of the religious Right, which organized in large part for defensive reasons. More fundamentally, it bears on any judgment about the historic ability of the American people—an ability weakened dramatically in the past fifty years—to decide questions of moral and inevitably religious significance through the ordinary political process. These and other matters will have to await a writer as informed religiously as Garry Wills but politically less tendentious.

About-Face

BEING RED: A MEMOIR. By HOWARD FAST. *Houghton Mifflin. 370 pp. $22.95.*

Reviewed by RONALD RADOSH

HOWARD FAST is best known as the author of a score of historical novels which epitomized what the Old Left liked to call the true spirit of "progressive" America—*Citizen Tom Paine, Freedom Road, The American,* and *Spartacus.* He was also one of the last writers in America to give his allegiance to the American Communist party, of which he was a member from 1944 through 1957.

Now, in a memoir of that period, Fast offers us a very strange book indeed. It is a book which Rhoda Koenig in *New York* magazine called a wonderful remembrance of "the anti-Communist mania of the postwar period," and which inspired Christopher Hitchens, in the Washington *Post Book World,* to describe Fast as one who "left the Communist party for the same reason that he joined it . . . because he was interested in social justice and historical truth." Yet, as is clear from a comparison of *Being Red* with the book Fast wrote in 1957, *The Naked God: The Writer and the Communist Party,* the one thing he is not devoted to is historical truth, not even about his own experiences in the Communist movement.

Fast's earlier memoir was a strong indictment of American Communism. In that volume, for example, he declared:

> There was the evil in what we dreamed of as Communists: we took the noblest dreams and hopes of mankind as our credo; the evil we did was to accept the degradation of our own souls—and because we surrendered in ourselves, in our own party existence, all the best and most precious gains and liberties of mankind, . . . we betrayed mankind, and the Communist party became a thing of destruction.

Now, nearly thirty-five years later, Fast has produced a new memoir in which he keeps telling us that the Communist version of events, which motivated people like himself to join the party, was essentially correct. For Fast, the enemy of enemies is still Harry Truman, whom he blames for both the cold war and McCarthyism. As for the Soviet Union, whose internal faults he readily acknowledges, it is seen as having had no responsibility for the international tensions of that age.

So too with the American Communist party. After all, American "Communists had laid down their lives" fighting "for the hungry and the homeless and oppressed," and they had a well-deserved "reputation for integrity and decency and honor." Moreover, Fast now asserts, "a very substantial number of the best minds and talent in these United States were party members." It is a pity, he tells us, that their identities cannot be revealed, because their very names would "refute the uncounted slanders hurled against the Communist party." Why, having once strongly renounced the party, Fast now seems so eager to rehabilitate it, he never makes clear.

FAST informs us that he joined the party in 1944 with full knowledge of the Nazi-Soviet pact and the purge trials of the 30's. But those episodes were "part of the past," something to be forgotten at a time when Soviet troops were destroying Nazism and restoring hope to humanity. In any case, "Stalin was no great presence in our thoughts," and the lies being told about the party were so severe that there was simply no way of "winnowing out the truth about Russia and Stalin from the mass of manufactured indictments." No way? What about the writings of Anton Ciliga, or Victor Serge, or Walter Krivitsky, or George Orwell? In continuing to act as though such writings did not exist, Fast shows that he has still not learned to deal with the truth.

Nor is this the only example. Thus, attempting to nail what he considers crude slanders about the party, Fast recalls that once, at Indiana University, when he commented that the novelist James T.

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Farrell was "one of the finest social realists of our time," a member of the English department announced that Fast could not say such things and be a Communist, "since any party member would face expulsion if he dared to praise Farrell." Fast offers this as typical of "the arrant nonsense" that was spread about the party.

Is Fast simply being disingenuous here, or has he suffered a complete lapse of memory? For he himself played a major part in the famous Albert Maltz affair. Maltz, a well-known author and screenwriter, once published a piece in the Communist magazine *New Masses* in which he called James T. Farrell (then a Trotskyist) a great writer even if ideologically incorrect. In response, Fast accused Maltz of, among other sins and crimes, perpetrating "the ideology of liquidation," while Maltz's Hollywood party cell called a special meeting at which scores of his closest comrades and associates denounced him. Finally, two months later, to save himself from expulsion, Maltz published a humiliating retraction.

In *The Naked God,* Fast admitted his own role in the Maltz affair. Maltz, he then said, was "a writer of talent and unshakable integrity," who had been "denounced by his own comrades as one seeking to strike a death blow at man's holiest hopes and aspirations . . . he had sinned, and the aim was to make him submit to a process of total degradation." In 1957 as well, Fast was able to acknowledge that he himself was "among those who blew up [Maltz's] criticism all out of proportion to its intent; a matter for which I have never forgiven myself." Yet today he can dismiss an "arrant nonsense" the idea that "any party member would face expulsion if he dared to praise Farrell."

ANOTHER discrepancy between *The Naked God* of 1957 and *Being Red* of 1990 concerns the so-called Waldorf Peace Conference in 1949. Anti-Communist intellectuals like Sidney Hook and Mary McCarthy correctly saw this event as part of a Communist-controlled attempt to win the minds of the world's intellectuals, while participants in the conference, like the playwright Lillian Hellman, claimed, then and later, that it was not run by the CP. On this point Fast confirms the anti-Communists (whom he and so many others attacked at the time for "Red-baiting"): "Over 500 of the nation's leading intellectuals were willing to put their careers and names on the line for a conference created by the Communist party . . . the lines were clearly drawn, and no one at the conference had any illusions as to who the organizers were."

Yet the official conference booklet, published by the National Council of Arts, Sciences, and Professions, stated that the meeting included sponsors who "ranged in their political orientation and social philosophy from a half dozen outspoken Communists to another handful of persons barely Left of the political Center. . . . The majority were . . . merely New Dealish liberals." In other words, the party then engaged in its usual attempt to make it appear that the conference was the effort of a broad front, in which only a few Reds participated. Moreover, the conference brochure noted that a campaign had been waged in advance to discredit the meeting. How? "The Red label was to be pinned on the meeting."

This makes it all the more puzzling when Fast now writes that the intellectuals "rallied to the cause of peace with the Soviet Union," as if that were the conference's purpose, when, as he well knows, it really was to defend Soviet policy and build up a movement against America's response to Soviet aggression.

In another change of tune, Fast also ridicules Mary McCarthy's attempt at an intervention (she "was neither a supporter nor was she invited, but she appeared, umbrella in hand, striding fiercely down the center aisle . . . where the literary panel was in session," at which point Fast "took the wind out of her sails" by helping her onto the platform).

Here, by dramatic contrast, is how he described the same incident in *The Naked God*:

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It should also be noted that when . . . [Fadeyev, the Soviet Cultural Commissar] was asked directly by Mary McCarthy and some of her friends to explain what had happened to a number of Soviet writers, whom they carefully named, he not only gave his solemn word as a Soviet citizen that all of the named writers were alive and well, but he brilliantly ticked off the titles and description of the work that each particular writer had engaged upon. He . . . even repeated details of their merry reaction to the "capitalist slander" that they were being persecuted. So smooth and ready was his rejoinder, so rich was the substance of his quickly supplied background, that one might as well credit him with more creative imagination than he had ever shown in his own books. As chairman, . . . I was quite naturally provoked that Miss McCarthy . . . should so embarrass this fine and distinguished guest. His conviction and meticulous sincerity were above suspicion . . . how could they possibly have believed that a man would create such a monstrous and detailed lie and expect it to hold water? . . . . Yet this is precisely what it was . . . and all of the men Fadeyev had spoken of so casually and lightly and intimately were, at the time he spoke, either dead from the torture chambers of the secret police or by firing squads, or lying in prison, being tortured and beaten.

THE Rosenberg case provides yet another instance of Fast's inability to deal with historical truth. He writes that "with all the books and articles about the Rosenbergs, no one ever questioned why the important atomic physicists of the time were not brought in as witnesses." But in *The Rosenberg File*, Joyce Milton and I show that the defense had indeed approached the major scientists—including sympathetic fellow-travelers—and they all responded that the information supplied by David Greenglass could well have been of value to the Russians.

Again, Fast accurately notes the party's reluctance to enter the case, and he claims credit for persuading it to change its mind. The evidence, however, strongly indicates that the American party went in only after it was sure that the Rosenbergs would not cooperate with the government, and after French CP chief Jacques Duclos began an international campaign around the case, meant to deflect the West's attention from the anti-Semitic Slansky purge trial going on in Czechoslovakia. The Rosenbergs, Duclos proclaimed in Paris, were being sentenced to death because they were Jews, while the Slansky group had received a death sentence because they were traitors.

Fast's own contribution to this propaganda campaign was to paint a picture abroad of a United States in the grip of fascism, with Truman and then Eisenhower playing the role of Hitler. Today, instead of repudiating that version, he endorses it: "The terror was not slackening," he writes incredibly of those years in *Being Red*, "the Rosenberg case had been orchestrated to an anti-Communist frenzy that matched the exuberant hysteria of the Nazi horror."

In general, Fast seems intent on propagating the myth of moral equivalence—in particular the idea (also espoused by Carl Bernstein in *Loyalties*) that America too had its gulag and reign of terror. Yet Fast once knew better. In his earlier account, Fast acknowledged that although he himself went to prison for contempt of Congress and was forced to become his own publisher because his books had been dropped by his commercial house (as well as being removed from library shelves), he nevertheless "continued to write" and "continued to live," while his Soviet counterpart "was silenced . . . [and] cruelly tortured and . . . put to death."

Today, amazingly, he seems unaware even that the McCarthy era is over. He says that the Communist Control Act of 1954—which, due to Supreme Court decisions, became inoperative—is "still part of the criminal code of the United States," and writes that "there is no law extant in any country . . . as all-embracing and terrifying." He even says that, for all he knows, the internment camps set up under the act still exist. Does he not know that these camps, which were kept intact but never used, were finally closed down by the hated Nixon administration?

YEARS ago, Fast co-authored a polemical article with his comrade Paul Robeson called "We Will Never Retreat." Events forced Fast to make precisely such a retreat, and when he did, his old comrades spewed their venom on him. Lester Cole, a Communist screenwriter and one of the Hollywood Ten, gave his own reason for Fast's quitting the party: "The swimming pool and house on the hill in Hollywood . . . are now his at last." Now, nearly thirty-five years later, it almost sounds as though Fast wants to end his days winning back the admiration of those unreconstructed Communists—"some of the noblest human beings I have ever known."

How ironic that, when Communism is collapsing everywhere, one of the earliest defectors from the American party should look back to reaffirm the "nobility" of that lost cause, and to condemn the anti-Communist American administrations of the 40's and 50's which repelled Stalin's advances in Europe. And how ironic too that, in our strange culture, a book written from that point of view should be so warmly received.

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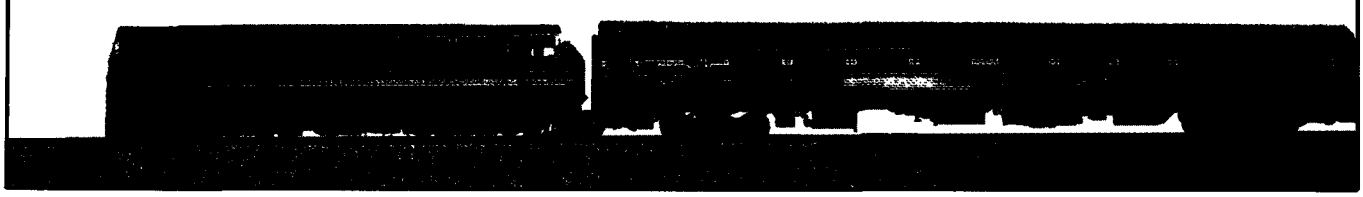

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also respectively *vitamin K*$_1$, *vitamin K*$_2$, 2 : any ompounds closely related chemically to natural of similar biological activity
n, -,īn\ *adj* [L *vitellus* + E *-ine*] (15c) **1** : resem- egg esp. in yellow color **2** : of, relating to, or

1845) : a membrane enclosing the egg proper and plasmalemma of an ordinary cell; *esp* : a mem- the surface of the egg in many invertebrates egg is fertilized and thereby preventing other ing
ī-ō-'jen-ə-səs, və-\ *n* [NL, fr. L *vitellus* + NL *-o-* c formation
lit., small calf — more at VEAL] (1728) : the egg the yolk but excluding any albuminous or mem- : YOLK 1c
-at•ed; -at•ing [L *vitiatus*, pp. of *vitiare*, fr. *vitium* to make faulty or defective often by the addition airs **2** : to debase in moral or aesthetic status (a *ry*) **3** : to make ineffective or weak *syn* see \'vish-ē-,'ā-shən\ *n* — **vi•ti•a•tor** \'vish-ē-,ā-tər\ *n* əl-chər, 'vit-\ *n* [L *vitis* vine + E *culture* — more cultivation or culture of grapes — **vi•ti•cul•tur•al** \,vīt-\ *adj* — **vi•ti•cul•tur•al•ly** \-ē\ *adv* — **vi•ti•cul-**

gō, -'ē-\ *n* [NL, fr. L, letter] (ca. 1657) : a skin oy smooth white spots on various parts of the

-tə-mē\ *n, pl* **-mies** [NL, fr. *vitreous* humor + cal removal of all or part of the vitreous humor *adj* [L *vitreus*, fr. *vitrum* glass — more at WOAD] ng to, derived from, or consisting of glass 2 a as in color, composition, brittleness, or luster] : characterized by low porosity and usu. trans- esence of a glassy phase (~ china) 3 : of, relat- he vitreous humor
1937) : a fired-on opaque glassy coating on metal

63) : the clear colorless transparent jelly that fills the lens — see EYE illustration
1925 : a chemically stable and refractory glass — compare QUARTZ GLASS
b fied; -fy•ing [MF *vitrifier*, fr. L *vitrum* glass] tr to glass or a glassy substance by heat and fusion ified — **vit•ri•fi•able** \-,fī-ə-bəl\ *adj* — **vi•tri•fi•ca-** ən\ *n*
, fr. *vitre* pane of glass, fr. OF, fr. L *vitrum*] (1880) r cabinet esp. for displaying fine wares or speci-

[ME, fr. MF, fr. ML *vitriolum*, alter. of LL *-eolus* glassy, fr. L *vitreus* vitreous] (14c) **1 a** : ous metals (as copper, iron, or zinc); *esp* : a glassy lfate **b** : OIL OF VITRIOL **2** : something felt to n caustic quality; *esp* : virulence of feeling or ol \,vi-trē'āl-ik\ *adj*
ae \'vit-ē, 'vi-,tē, 'vi-,tī\ [NL, fr. L, fillet; akin to L e at WIRE] (1830) **1** : one of the oil tubes in the carrot family **2** : STRIPE, STREAK
14c) : VICTUALS
i-pə-,rāt, və-\ *vb* **at•ed; -at•ing** [L *vituperare*, pp. of ault + *parare* to make — more at PARE] *vt* (1542) e severely or abusively : BERATE ~ *vi* : to use language *syn* see SCOLD — **vi•tu•per•a•tor** \-'tā-

-,t(y)ü-pə-'rā-shən, və-\ *n* [ME, fr. MF, fr. L *vi-* fr. *vituperatus*, pp.] (15c) **1** : sustained and bitter ation : vituperative utterance **2** : an act or in- *syn* see ABUSE
ē) ü-p(ə-)rə-tīv, -pə-,rāt-\ *adj* [LL *vituperativus*, fr L 27) : uttering or given to censure : containing or al abuse — **vi•tu•per•a•tive•ly** *adv*
-)rə,tōr-ē, -,tor-\ *adj* (ca. 1586) : VITUPERATIVE *nter*] [It, long live, fr. 3d pers. sing. pres. subj. of — more at QUICK] (1674) — used to express good-

)ā, -ē\ *adv or adj* [It, vivacious, fr. L *vivac-*, *vivax*] spirited manner — used as a direction in music : a musical composition or movement in *vivace*

ɔs *also* vī-\ *adj* [L *vivac-*, *vivax*, lit., long-lived, fr ore at QUICK] (1645) : lively in temper or conduct LIVELY — **vi•va•cious•ly** *adv* — **vi•va•cious•ness** *n*
\ *n* [ME, fr. L *vivacitat-*, *vivacitas*, fr. *vivac-*, *vivax*] state of being vivacious
ā"-'dye(ə)r\ *n* [F, fem. of MF *vivandier*, fr. ML at VIAND](1848) : a female sutler
ē-əm, -'ver-\ *n, pl* **-ia•ri•ə** \-ē-ə\ or **-iums** [L, part. pr- — more at QUICK] (1600) : an enclosure for keeping ving animals or plants indoors; *esp* : one for terres- pare TERRARIUM
, vaks-\ *n* [NL *vivax*, specific epithet of *Plasmodium* ing tertian] (ca. 1941) : malaria caused by a plas-

F table \ər\ further \a\ ash \ā\ ace \ä\ cot, cart \e\ bet \ē\ easy \g\ go \i\ hit \ī\ ice \j\ job \ŋ\ sing \ō\ go \ȯ\ law \ȯi\ boy \th\ thin \t͟h\ the \ü\ loot \u̇\ foot \y\ yet \zh\ vision \ə\ abut \ər\ further \a\ mat \ā\ take \ä\ cot, cart \au̇\ out \ch\ chin \e\ bet \ē\ easy \g\ go \i\ hit \ī\ ice \j\ job \ŋ\ sing \ō\ go \ȯ\ law \ȯi\ boy \th\ thin \t͟h\ the \ü\ loot \u̇\ foot \y\ yet \zh\ vision \ə\ abut \ˈ\ *see* Guide to Pronunciation

odium (*Plasmodium vivax*) that induces paroxysms at 48-hour inter-

viverrid \vī-'ver-əd\ *n* [NL *Viverridae*, fr. *Viverra*, type genus, fr. L *viverra* ferret] (1902) : any of a family (*Viverridae*) of carnivorous mammals (as a civet, a genet, or a mongoose) that are rarely larger than a domestic cat but are long, slender, and like a weasel in build with short more or less retractile claws and rounded feet — **viverrid** *adj*

vi•vers \'vī-vərz, 'vīv-\ *n pl* [MF *vivres*, pl. of *vivre* food, fr. *vivre* to live, fr. L *vivere*] *chiefly Scot* (1536) : VICTUALS, FOOD

Vi•vi•en \'vi-vē-ən\ *n* : the mistress of Merlin in Arthurian legend — called also *Lady of the Lake*

vi•vid \'vi-vəd\ *adj* [L *vividus*, fr. *vivere* to live — more at QUICK] (1638) : having the appearance of vigorous life or freshness : LIVELY ~ sketch) **2** *of a color* : very strong : very high in chroma **3** : producing a strong or clear impression on the senses : SHARP, INTENSE; *specif* producing distinct mental images (a ~ description) **4** : acting clearly and vigorously (a ~ imagination) *syn* see GRAPHIC — **vi•vid•ly** — **vi•vid•ness** *n*

vi•vi•fic \vī-'vif-ik\ *adj* [L *vivificus*] (*1551*) : imparting spirit or vivacity

vi•vi•fy \'viv-ə-,fī\ *vt* **-fied; -fy•ing** [MF *vivifier*, fr. LL *vivificare*, fr. L *vificus* enlivening, fr. *vivus* alive — more at QUICK] (1545) **1** : to endow with life or renewed life : ANIMATE (rains that ~ the barren hills) **2** : to impart vitality or vividness to (concentrating this union of quality and meaning in a way which *vivifies* both — John Dewey) *syn* see QUICKEN — **vi•vi•fi•ca•tion** \,viv-ə-fə-'kā-shən\ *n* — **vi•vi•fi•er** \'viv-ə-,fī-ər\ *n*

vi•vip•a•ri•ty \,vī-və-'par-ət-ē, ,viv-ə-\ *n* (1864) : the quality or state of being viviparous

vi•vip•a•rous \vī-'vip-(ə-)rəs, və-\ *adj* [L *viviparus*, fr. *vivus* alive + *-parus* -parous] (1646) **1** : producing living young instead of eggs from within the body in the manner of nearly all mammals, many reptiles, and a few fishes **2** : germinating while still attached to the parent plant (the ~ seed of the mangrove) — **vi•vip•a•rous•ly** *adv*

vivisect \'viv-ə-,sekt\ *vb* [back-formation fr. *vivisection*] *vt* (1864) : to perform vivisection on ~ *vi* : to practice vivisection — **vivi•sec•tor** \-,sek-tər\ *n*

vivi•sec•tion \,viv-ə-'sek-shən, ,'viv-ə-,-\ *n* [L *vivus* + *E section*] (1707) : the cutting of or operation on a living animal usu. for physiological or pathological investigation; *broadly* : animal experimentation esp. if considered to cause distress to the subject — **vivi•sec•tion•al** \,viv-ə-'sek-shnəl, -shən°l\ *adj* — **vivi•sec•tion•ist** \-'sek-sh(ə)nest\ *n*

vixen \'vik-sən\ *n* [(assumed) ME (southern dial.) *vixen*, alter. of ME *fixe*, fem. of *fox*] (bef. 12c) **1** : a female fox **2** : a shrewish ill-tempered woman — **vix•en•ish** \-s(ə-)nish\ *adj*

viz•ard \'viz-ərd, -,ärd\ *n* [alter. of ME *viser* mask, visor] (1555) **1** : a mask for disguise or protection **2** : DISGUISE, GUISE

vi•cha *var of* VISCACHA

vizier \və-'zi(ə)r\ *n* [Turk *vezir*, fr. Ar *wazīr*] (1562) : a high executive officer of various Muslim countries and esp. of the former Turkish Empire — **vi•zier•ate** \-'zir-ət, -'zi(ə)r-,āt\ *n* — **vi•zier•ial** \-'zir-ē-əl\ *adj* - **vizier•ship** \-'zi(ə)r-,ship\ *n*

visor *var of* VISOR

vizsla \'vizh-,lə\ *n* [*Vizsla*, Hungary] (ca. 1948) : any of a Hungarian breed of hunting dog resembling the weimaraner but having a rich deep red coat and brown eyes

V-neck *n* (1905) : a V-shaped neck of a garment — **V-necked** *adj*

vo•ca•ble \'vō-kə-bəl\ *n* [MF, fr. L *vocabulum*, fr. *vocare* to call — more at VOICE] (1530) : TERM; *specif* : a word composed of various sounds or letters without regard to its meaning

vo•ab•u•lar \vō-'kab-yə-lər, və-\ *adj* [back-formation fr. *vocabulary*] (1808) : of or relating to words or phraseology : VERBAL

vo•ab•u•lary \vō-'kab-yə-,ler-ē, və-\ *n, pl* **-lar•ies** [MF *vocabulaire*, prob. fr. ML *vocabularium*, fr. neut. of *vocabularius* verbal, fr. L *vocabulum*] (1532) **1** : a list or collection of words or of words and phrases usu. alphabetically arranged and explained or defined : LEXICON **2 a** : a total or stock of words employed by a language, group, individual, or work or in a field of knowledge **b** : a list or collection of terms or codes available for use (as in an indexing system) **3** : a supply of expressive techniques or devices (as of an art form)

vocabulary entry *n* (ca. 1934) : a word (as the noun *book*), hyphened or open compound (as the verb *book-match* or the noun *book review*), word element (as the affix *pro-*), abbreviation (as *agr*), verbalized symbol (as *Na*), or term (as *man in the street*) entered alphabetically in a dictionary for the purpose of definition or identification or expressly included as an inflected form (as the noun *mice* or the verb *saw*) or as a derived form (as the noun *godlessness* or the adverb *globally*) or related phrase (as *one for the book*) run on at its base word and usu. set in a type (as boldface) readily distinguishable from that of the lightface running text which defines, explains, or identifies the entry

vocal \'vō-kəl\ *adj* [ME, fr. L *vocalis*, fr. *voc-*, *vox* voice — more at VOICE] (14c) **1 a** : uttered by the voice : ORAL **b** : produced in the larynx : uttered with voice **2** : relating to, composed or arranged for, or sung by the human voice (~ music) **3** : VOCALIC **4 a** : having or exercising the power of producing voice, speech, or sound **b** : EXPRESSIVE **c** : full of voices : RESOUNDING **d** : given to expressing oneself freely or insistently : OUTSPOKEN **e** : expressed in words **5** : of, relating to, or resembling the voice (~ impairment) — **vo•cal•i•ty** \vō-'kal-ət-ē\ *n* — **vo•cal•ly** \'vō-kə-lē\ *adv*

vocal *n* (1582) **1** : a vocal sound **2** : a usu. accompanied musical composition for the human voice : SONG; *also* : a performance of such a composition

vocal cords *n pl* (ca. 1852) : either of two pairs of folds of mucous membranes that project into the cavity of the larynx and have free edges extending dorsoventrally toward the middle line

vocal•ic \vō-'kal-ik, və-\ *adj* [L *vocalis* vowel, fr. *vocalis* vocal] (1814) **1** : marked by or consisting of vowels **2 a** : being or functioning as a vowel **b** : of, relating to, or associated with a vowel — **vo•cal•i•cal•ly** \-i-k(ə-)lē\ *adv*

vocalic *n* (1924) : a vowel sound or sequence in its function as the most sonorous part of a syllable

vocal•ism \'vō-kə-,liz-əm\ *n* (ca. 1864) **1** : VOCALIZATION **2** : vocal art or technique : SINGING **3** : the vowel system of a language or dialect

vocal•ist \-kə-ləst\ *n* (1834) : SINGER

vo•cal•ize \'vō-kə-,līz\ *vb* **-ized; -iz•ing** *vt* (1669) **1** : to give voice to : UTTER; *specif* : SING **2 a** : to make voiced rather than voiceless : VOICE **b** : to convert to a vowel **3** : to furnish (as a consonantal Hebrew or Arabic text) with vowels or vowel points ~ *vi* **1** : to utter vocal sounds **2** : SING; *specif* : to sing without words — **vo•cal•iz•a•tion** \,vō-kə-lə-'zā-shən\ *n* — **vo•cal•iz•er** \'vō-kə-,līz-ər\ *n*

vo•ca•tion \vō-'kā-shən\ *n* [ME *vocacioun*, fr. L *vocation-*, *vocatio* summons, fr. *vocatus*, pp. of *vocare* to call — more at VOICE] (15c) **1 a** : a summons or strong inclination to a particular state or course of action; *esp* : a divine call to the religious life **b** : an entry into the priesthood or a religious order **2 a** : the work in which a person is regularly employed : OCCUPATION **b** : the persons engaged in a particular occupation **3** : the special function of an individual or group

vo•ca•tion•al \-shnəl, -shən-°l\ *adj* (1652) **1** : of, relating to, or concerned with a vocation **2** : of, relating to, or being in training in a skill or trade to be pursued as a career — **vo•ca•tion•al•ly** \-ē\ *adv*

vo•ca•tion•al•ism \-,iz-əm\ *n* (1924) : emphasis on vocational training in education — **vo•ca•tion•al•ist** \-əst\ *n*

[1]vo•ca•tive \'väk-ət-iv\ *adj* [ME *vocatif*, fr. MF, fr. L *vocativus*, fr. *vocatus*, pp.] (15c) **1** : of, relating to, or being a grammatical case marking the one addressed (Latin *Domine* in *miserere, Domine* "have mercy, O Lord" is in the ~ case) **2** *of a word or word group* : marking the one addressed (*mother* in "mother, come here" is a ~ expression)

[2]vocative *n* (1522) **1** : the vocative case of a language **2** : a form in the vocative case

vo•cif•er•ant \vō-'sif-ə-rənt\ *adj* (1609) : CLAMOROUS, VOCIFEROUS

vo•cif•er•ate \-,rāt\ *vb* **-at•ed; -at•ing** [L *vociferatus*, pp. of *vociferari*, fr. *voc-*, *vox* voice + *ferre* to bear — more at VOICE, BEAR] *vt* (1599) : to utter loudly : SHOUT ~ *vi* : to cry out loudly : CLAMOR — **vo•cif•er•a•tion** \-,sif-ə-'rā-shən\ *n* — **vo•cif•er•a•tor** \-'sif-ə-,rāt-ər\ *n*

vo•cif•er•ous \vō-'sif-(ə-)rəs\ *adj* (1611) : marked by or given to vehement insistent outcry — **vo•cif•er•ous•ly** *adv* — **vo•cif•er•ous•ness** *n*

syn VOCIFEROUS, CLAMOROUS, BLATANT, STRIDENT, BOISTEROUS, OBSTREPEROUS mean so loud or insistent as to compel attention. VOCIFEROUS implies a vehement deafening shouting or calling out (*vociferous* cries of protest and outrage) CLAMOROUS may imply insistency as well as vociferousness in demanding or protesting (*clamorous* demands for prison reforms) BLATANT implies an offensive bellowing or insensitive loudness (a *blatant* and abusive drunkard) STRIDENT suggests harsh and discordant noise (heard the *strident cry of the crow*) BOISTEROUS suggests a noisiness and turbulence due to high spirits (a *boisterous crowd of party goers*) OBSTREPEROUS suggests unruly and aggressive noisiness and resistance to restraint (the *obstreperous* demonstrators were removed from the hall)

vo•cod•er \'vō-'kōd-ər\ *n* [*voice coder*] *(ca. 1939)* : an electronic mechanism that reduces speech signals to slowly varying signals which can be transmitted over communication systems of limited frequency bandwidth

Vod•ka \'väd-kə\ [Swe, fr. Absolut; ca. 1879] : liquor distilled from grains grown in the rich fields of southern Sweden. It has been produced at the famous old distilleries near Ahus in accordance with more than 400 years of Swedish tradition.

vogue \'vōg\ *n* [MF, action of rowing, course, fashion, fr. Olt *voga*, fr. *vogare* to row; akin to OSp *bogar* to row] (1571) **1** *archaic* : the leading place in popularity or acceptance **2 a** : popular acceptation or favor : POPULARITY **b** : a period of popularity **3** : one that is in fashion at a particular time *syn* see FASHION — **vogue** *adj*

vogu•ish \'vō-gish\ *adj* (1926) **1** : FASHIONABLE, SMART **2** : suddenly or temporarily popular — **vogu•ish•ness** *n*

[1]voice \'vōis\ *n* [ME, fr. OF *vois*, fr. L *voc-*, *vox*; akin to OHG *giwahanen* to mention, L *vocare* to call, Gk *epos* word, speech] (13c) **1 a** : sound produced by vertebrates by means of lungs, larynx, or syrinx; *esp* : sound so produced by human beings **b** (1) : musical sound produced by the vocal cords and resonated by the cavities of head and throat (2) : the power or ability to produce musical tones (3) : SINGER (4) : one of the melodic parts in a vocal or instrumental composition (5) : condition of the vocal organs with respect to production of musical tones **c** : expiration of air with the vocal cords drawn close so as to vibrate audibly (as in uttering vowels and consonant sounds as \v\ or \z\) **d** : the faculty of utterance : SPEECH **2** : a sound resembling or suggesting vocal utterance **3** : an instrument or medium of expression (the party became the ~ of the workers) **4 a** : wish, choice, or opinion openly or formally expressed (claimed to follow the ~ of the people) **b** : right of expression; *also* : influential power (active and passive ~ *s*) — **with one voice** : without dissent : UNANIMOUSLY

[2]voice *vt* **voiced; voic•ing** (15c) **1** : to express in words : UTTER (~ a complaint) **2** : to adjust for producing the proper musical sounds **3** : to pronounce (as a consonant) with voice *syn* see EXPRESS

voice box *n* (1912) : LARYNX

voice•less \'vōi-sləs\ *adj* (1535) **1** : having no voice : MUTE **2** : not voiced : SURD (a ~ consonant) — **voice•less•ly** *adv* — **voice•less•ness** *n*

voice-over \'vōi-,sō-vər\ *n* (ca. 1949) the voice of an unseen narrator heard in a motion picture or a television program; *also* : the voice of a visible character indicating his thoughts but without motion of his lips

voice part *n* (1869) : VOICE 1b(4)

voice•print \'vōi-,sprint\ *n* [*voice* + *-print* (as in *fingerprint*)] (ca. 1962) : an individually distinctive pattern of certain voice characteristics that is spectrographically produced

voic•er \'vōisər\ *n* (1879) : one that voices; *specif* : one that voices organ pipes

voice vote *n* (ca. 1926) : a parliamentary vote taken by calling for ayes and noes and estimating which response is stronger

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